

A DELL COMIC  
**DELL**  
A DELL COMIC

10¢

NO. 301

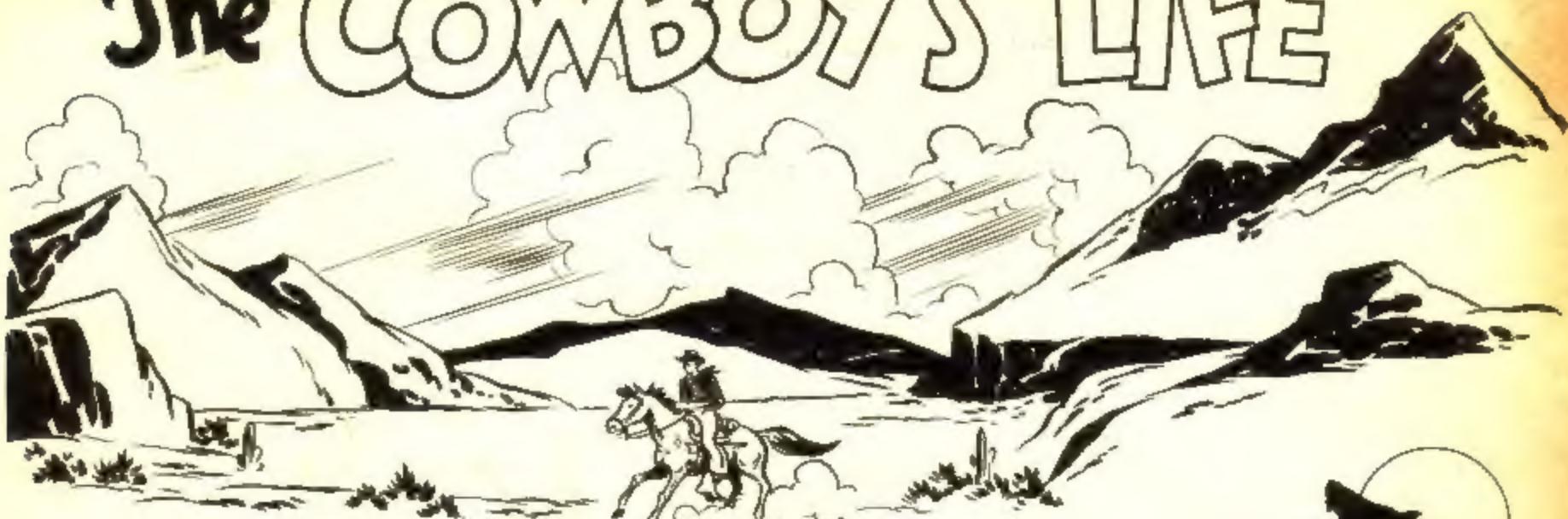
# ZANE GREY

## the **mysterious rider**

52 pages -  
**ALL COMICS!**



# The COWBOY'S LIFE



THE BAWL OF A STEER TO A COWBOY'S EAR  
IS MUSIC OF SWEETEST STRAIN;  
AND THE HELPING NOTES OF THE WILD COYOTES  
TO HIM ARE A GLAD REFRAIN.



AND HIS JOLLY SONG SPEEDS HIM ALONG  
AS HE THINKS OF HIS LITTLE GAL  
WITH GOLDEN HAIR WHO IS WAITING THERE  
AT THE BARS OF THE HOME CORRAL.

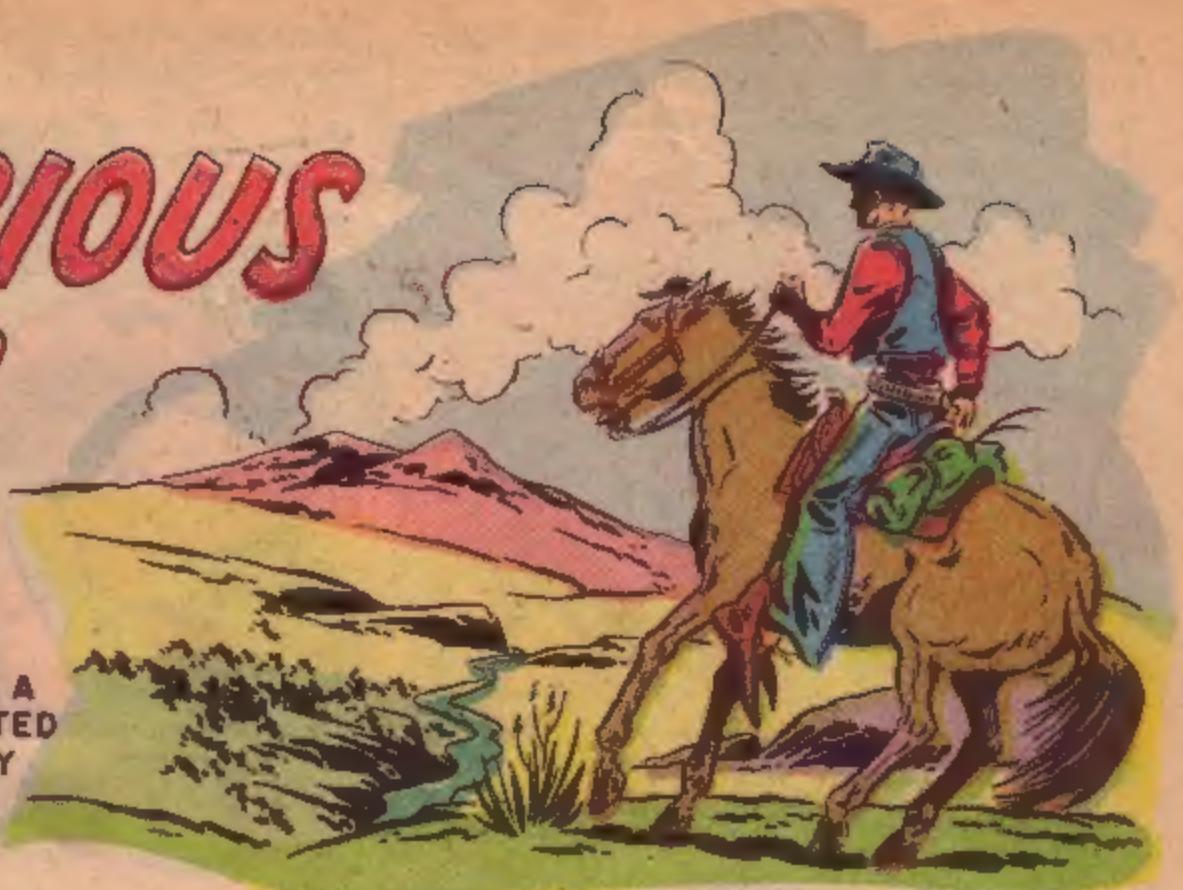


FOR A KINGLY CROWN IN THE NOISY TOWN  
HIS SADDLE HE WOULDN'T CHANGE;  
NO LIFE SO FREE AS THE LIFE WE SEE  
'WAY OUT ON THE YASO RANGE.

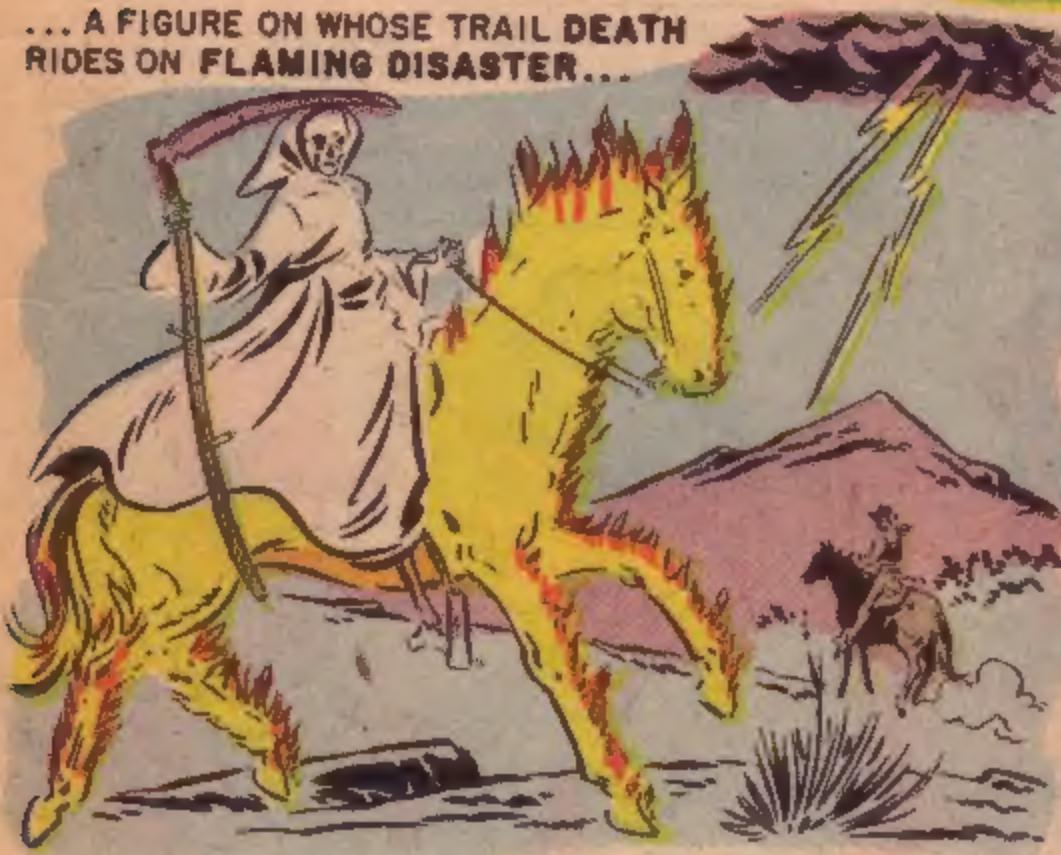
# The **MYSTERIOUS RIDER**

By ZANE GREY

FOR NEARLY A SCORE OF YEARS, A MYSTERIOUS WANDERER HAS HAUNTED THE MOUNTAIN TRACKS AND LONELY SETTLEMENTS OF COLORADO...



...A FIGURE ON WHOSE TRAIL DEATH RIDES ON FLAMING DISASTER...



YET, UNHARMED, THE MAN WITH THE BURNING EYES, WHO CALLS HIMSELF BENT WADE, RIDES ON...

...ALWAYS ON, TO HIS NEXT RENDEZVOUS WITH MEN WHO ARE ABOUT TO DIE...

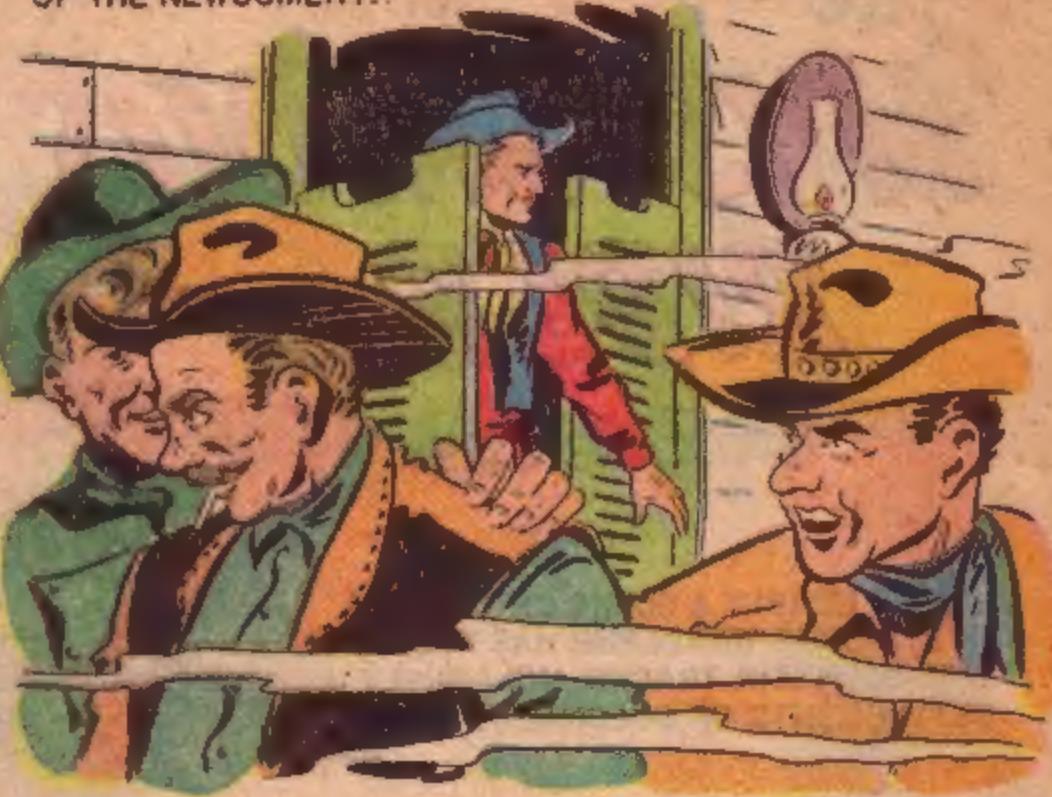


...AND THROUGH THAT FAR-FLUNG WILDERNESS THE APPROACH OF AN UNKNOWN RIDER BRINGS ONE DREADED NAME TO MIND --- "WADE! WILL IT BE BENT WADE?"

ONE NIGHT, NEAR SUNDOWN, A LONE RIDER PICKS HIS WAY DOWN TO A MINING CAMP, DEEP IN A MOUNTAIN GULCH .



NOBODY IN THE CROWDED SALOON NOTICES THE ENTRANCE OF THE NEWCOMER . . .



BUT AS HE MOVES TO THE BAR, EVERY HEAD TURNS TOWARD THE STRANGER WITH THE BURNING EYES . . .



-- BUT I'M LOOKING FOR A CHILD WHOSE FOLKS WERE KILLED BY INJUNS, IN A RAID ON A WAGON TRAIN -- - I'LL TELL YOU MY STORY, AND THEN -- -



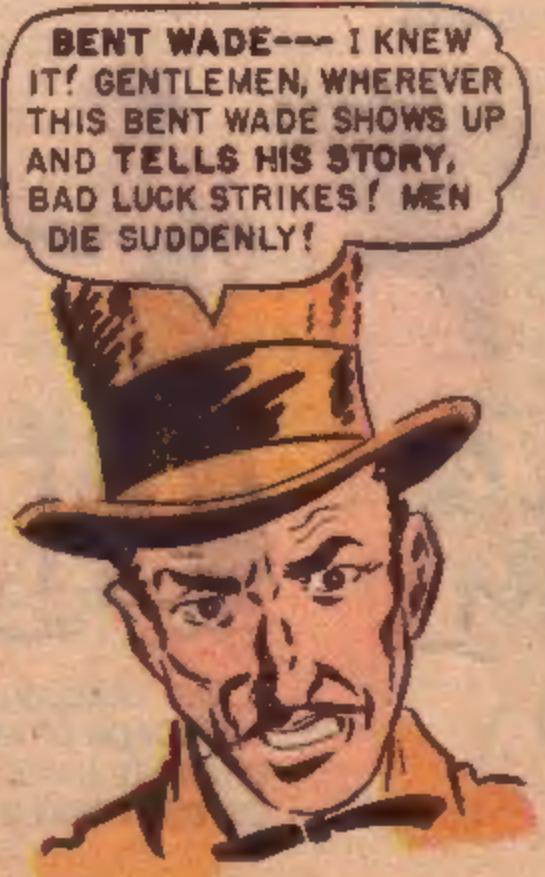
JUST A MINUTE! WHO ARE YOU, MISTER ?

MY NAME IS WADE!

BENT WADE-- I KNEW IT! GENTLEMEN, WHEREVER THIS BENT WADE SHOWS UP AND TELLS HIS STORY, BAD LUCK STRIKES! MEN DIE SUDDENLY!

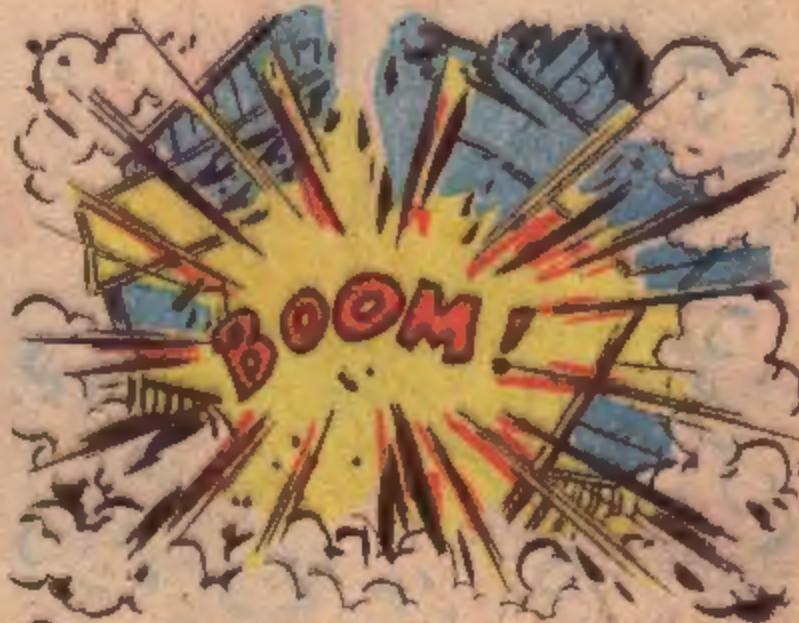
I VOTE THAT WE WIPE OUT HIS JINX!

YEAH! RIGHT NOW!



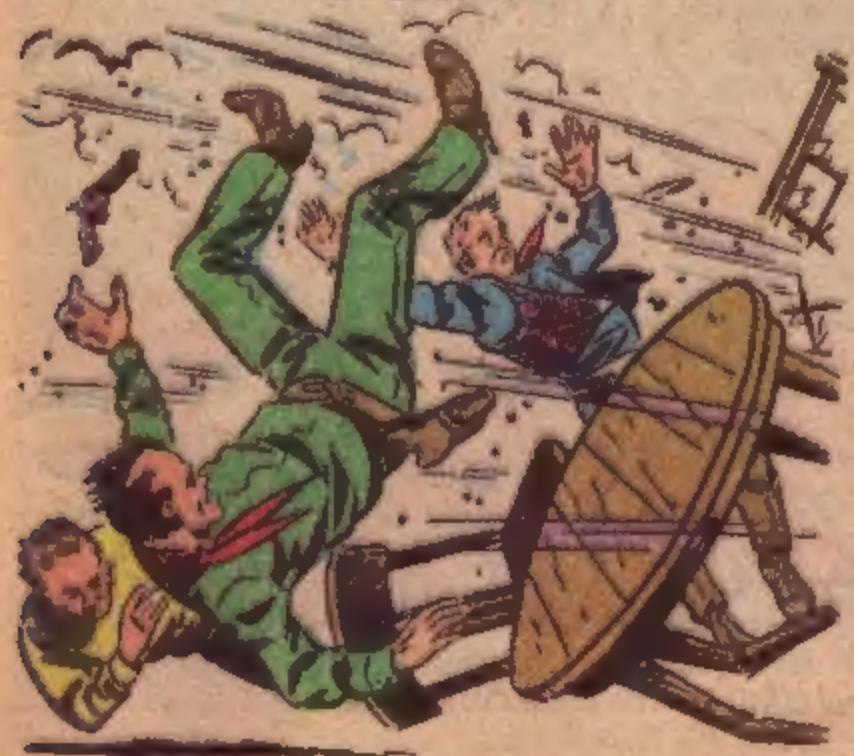


THE ROOM ROCKS TO GUNFIRE... BULLETS CUT WADE'S CLOTHING, BUT FAIL TO STOP HIS COOL RETREAT...



ONE WILD SHOT DETONATES A STOCK OF CAPS AND BLASTING POWDER ACROSS THE STREET...

LIKE THE CRASH OF DOOM THE BLAST HURLS EVERY MAN TO THE FLOOR...



HEY! WHAT'S  
HAPPENING  
NOW?

THE GROUND'S MOVING  
UNDER US!

R.R.RUMBLE

BENT WADE HAS GONE... BUT THE CHAIN OF  
CALAMITY THAT HE BROUGHT CONTINUES...

LOOSENERED BY THE JAR OF THE DYNAMITE  
BLAST, THE WHOLE FLANK OF THE MOUNTAIN  
BREAKS AWAY...

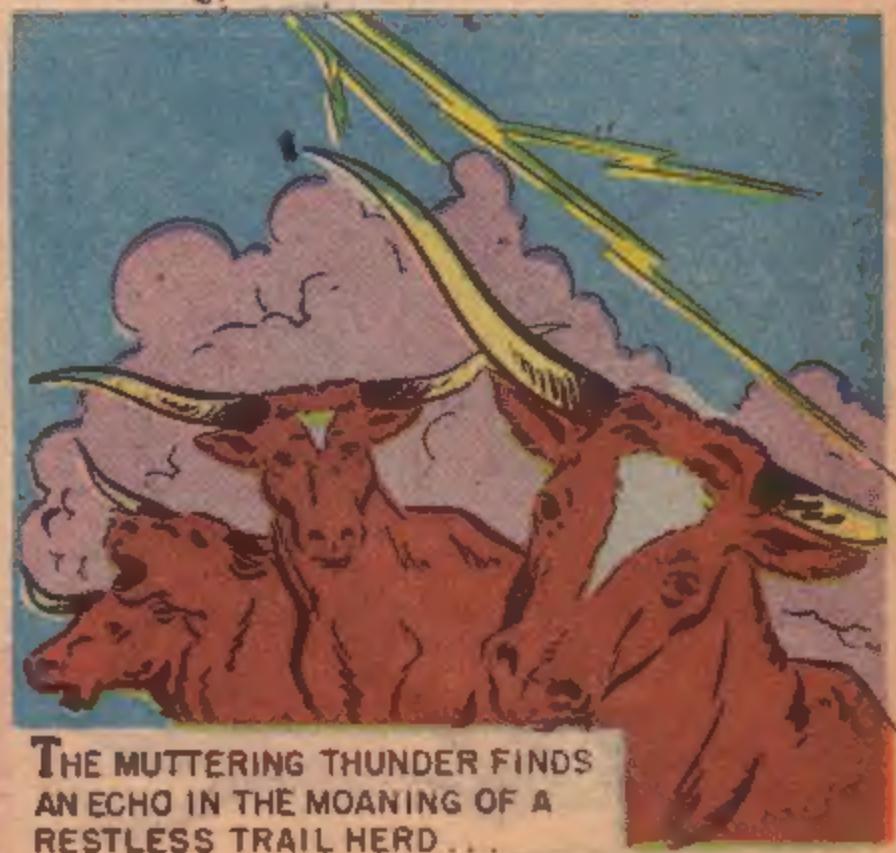
...AND SLIDES INTO  
THE GULCH...



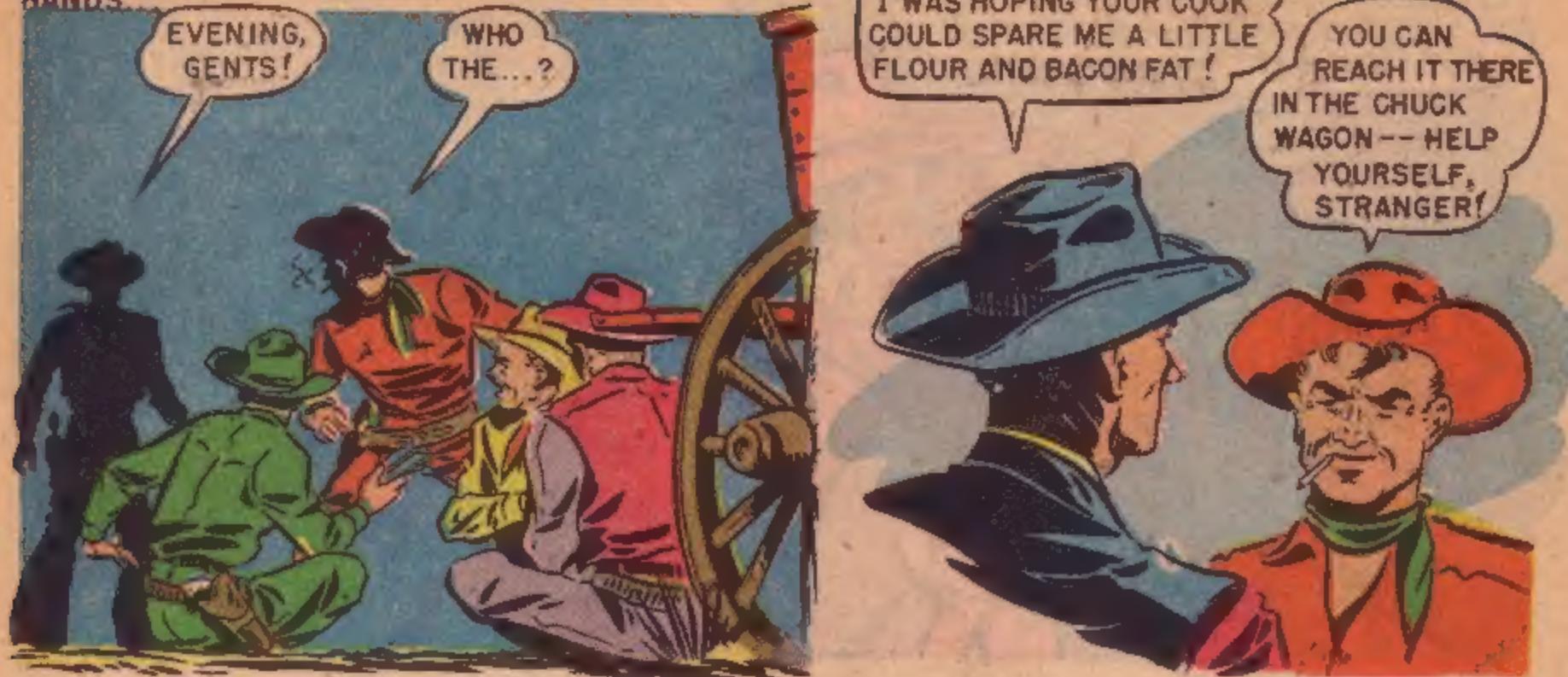
A FEW NIGHTS LATER, DISTANT LIGHTNING GLOWS  
ABOVE WADE'S LONELY TRAIL...



THE MUTTERING THUNDER FINDS  
AN ECHO IN THE MOANING OF A  
RESTLESS TRAIL HERD...



AND THE SHORT TEMPER OF SLEEPLESS COW  
HANDS.



THANKS, BOYS! I SURE HOPE  
THAT STORM BLOWS OVER--  
IT'S HARD ON THE NERVES OF  
MAN AND BEAST!

RUMBLE-UMBLE-UMBLE-UMBLE-

FROM NOW ON, TWO-  
SPOT, JUST KEEP YOUR HANDS--  
AND YOUR CARDS--IN SIGHT!

JIM, YOU'D  
BETTER SAY THAT  
WITH A SMILE, OR--



THE GROWL OF THUNDER GROWS... AND AMONG THE  
PLAYERS TENSION MOUNTS...

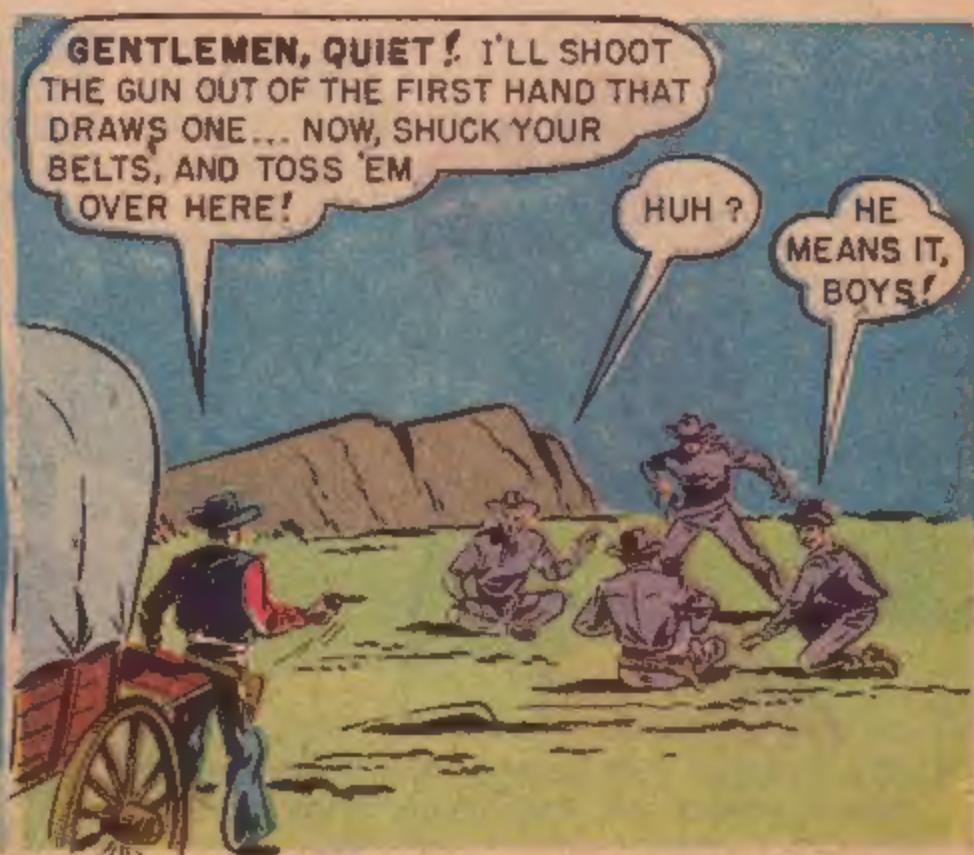
OR--WHAT, TWO-SPOT?  
MAKE YOUR PLAY!

I WILL --  
IF YOUR FINGERS  
TOUCH THAT  
GUN!

GENTLEMEN, QUIET! I'LL SHOOT  
THE GUN OUT OF THE FIRST HAND THAT  
DRAWS ONE... NOW, SHUCK YOUR  
BELTS, AND TOSS 'EM  
OVER HERE!

HUH?

HE  
MEANS IT,  
BOYS!



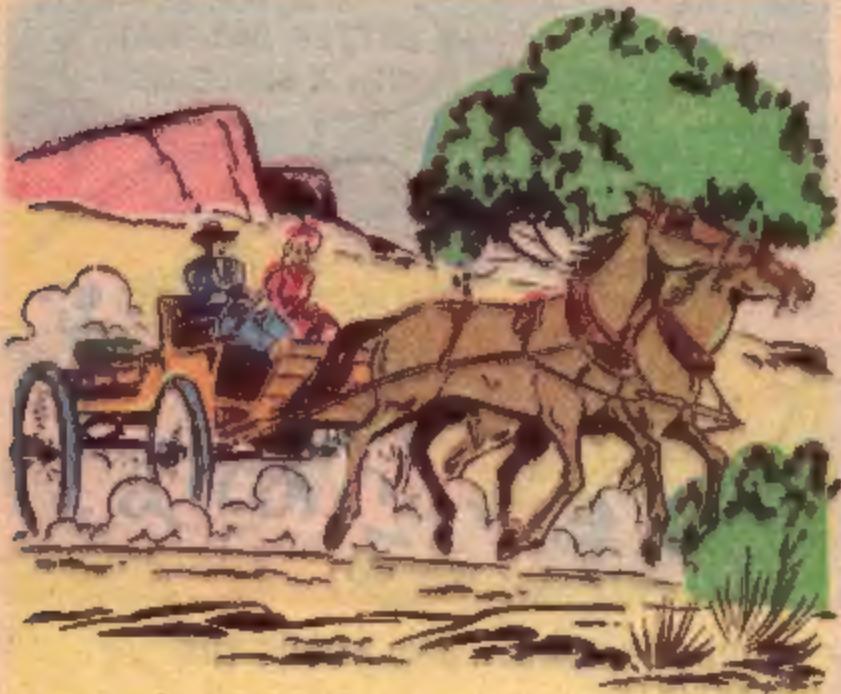
THANK YOU, GENTS! MAYBE YOU DON'T  
YET KNOW THE AWFUL THING IT CAN BE  
TO TAKE A HUMAN LIFE--DELIBERATELY--  
BUT I KNOW IT!



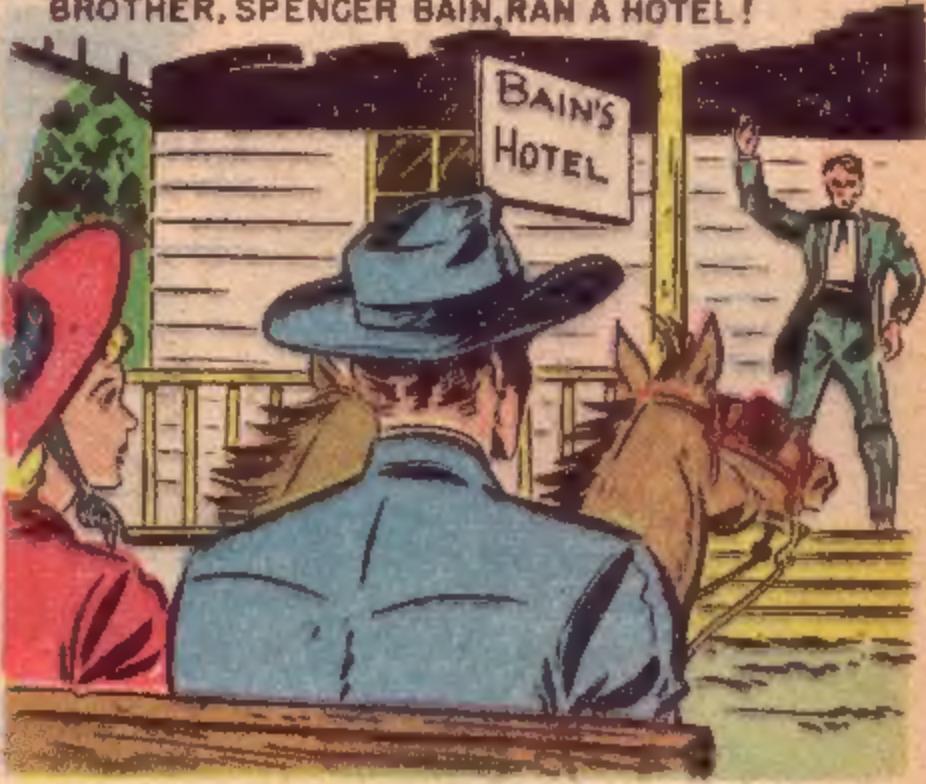
AND, SO THAT YOU'LL ALWAYS  
REMEMBER, I'M GOING TO TELL YOU  
ALL MY STORY--THE STORY OF A MAN  
WHO KILLED AN INNOCENT PARTY IN  
COLD BLOOD AND DROVE HIS WIFE  
TO HER DEATH!



"TWENTY YEARS AGO, I CAME FROM MISSOURI  
WITH A LOVELY YOUNG WIFE TO MAKE A  
HOME IN KANSAS!"



"WE STOPPED AT DODGE CITY WHERE LUCY'S  
BROTHER, SPENCER BAIN, RAN A HOTEL!"



"BAIN HAD A GAMBLING PARD NAMED CAP FOLSOM...  
AND MORE THAN ONCE I WATCHED THE PAIR OF  
THEM FLEECE A STRANGER AT CARDS."

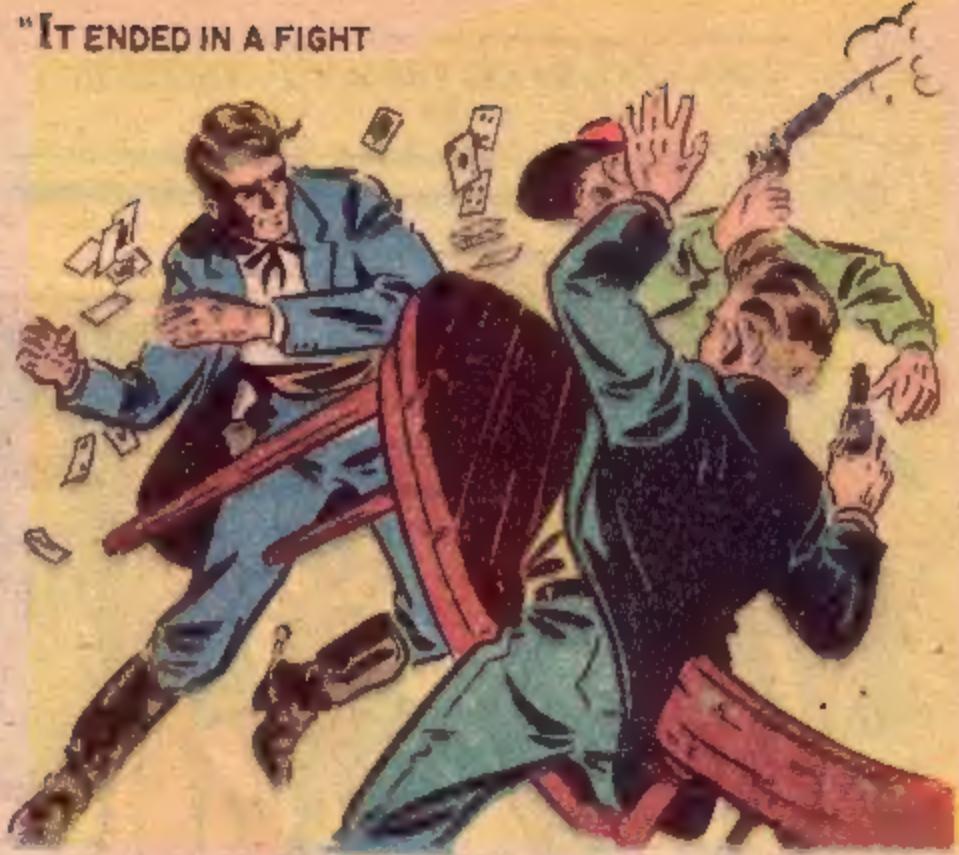


"LUCY THOUGHT THE WORLD OF HER BROTHER  
...SO MUCH THAT SHE WAS BLIND TO HIS  
CROOKED NATURE!"



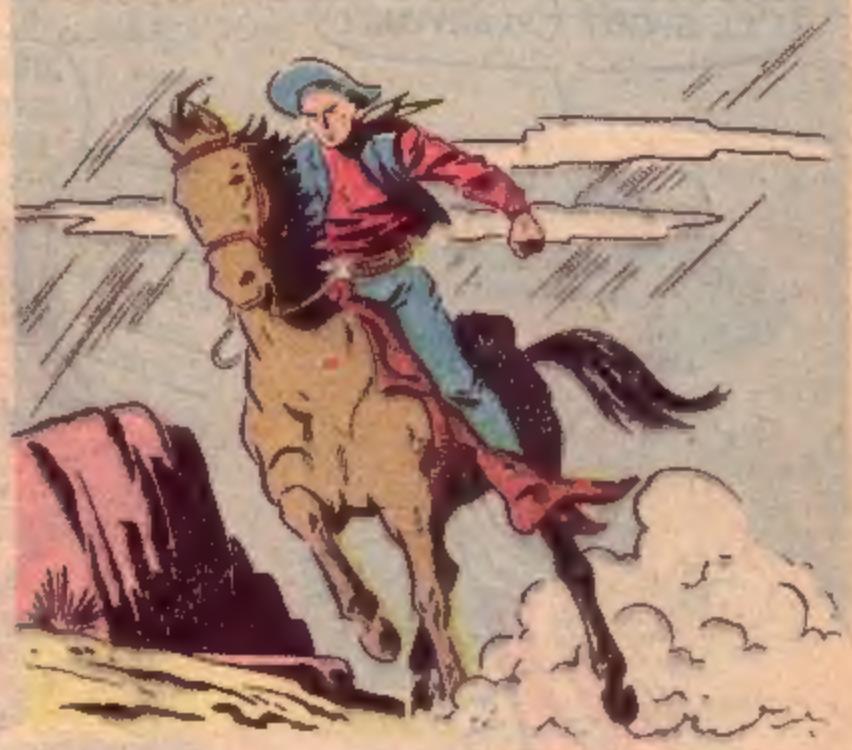
ONE DAY I COULDN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER.  
AND I CALLED HIM.

"IT ENDED IN A FIGHT



"NOBODY WAS HURT, BUT LUCY BLAMED ME FOR STIRRING UP TROUBLE!"

"I CLEARED OUT NEXT DAY TO LOOK FOR A JOB AND A HOME AWAY FROM LUCY'S RELATIVES.



"DURING ONE OF MY LONG ABSENCES FROM DODGE CITY, MY LITTLE DAUGHTER WAS BORN-- BUT MEANWHILE, BAIN HAD POISONED LUCY'S MIND AGAINST ME!"



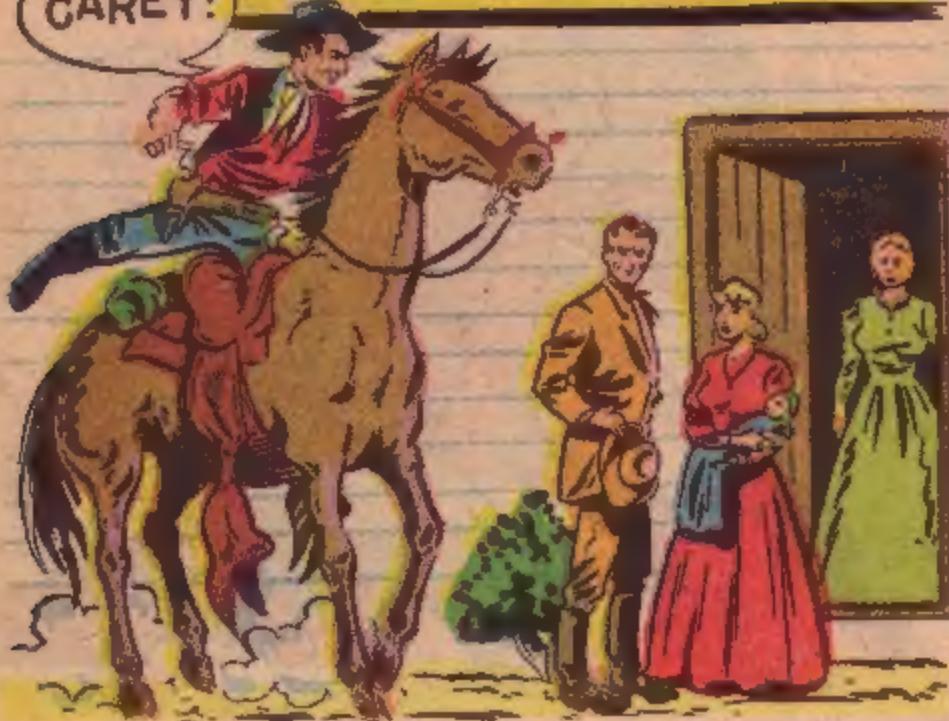
"I NEVER KNEW I WAS A FATHER TILL I GOT BACK... BAIN TOLD ME THAT LUCY AND HER BABY HAD GONE... WITH A GENT NAMED CAREY!"

"SUSPECTING THE WORST, I TRAILED CAREY AND MY WIFE.



"... TO A TOWN THREE DAYS' RIDE FROM DODGE CITY!"

CAREY!



DRAW YOUR GUN, CAREY--  
I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!

FOR WHAT?  
ARE YOU  
CRAZY, WADE?



DRAW, YOU COYOTE -- OR  
I'LL SHOOT YOU ANYWAY!



"LUCY'S CRY MAY HAVE SPOILED HIS  
DRAW..."



"ANYHOW, HE WAS DEAD  
BEFORE HE COULD FINISH  
IT."



"MINUTES LATER, I HEARD SOMEONE TALKING... IT WAS  
THE WOMAN IN WHOSE HOUSE LUCY LIVED!"

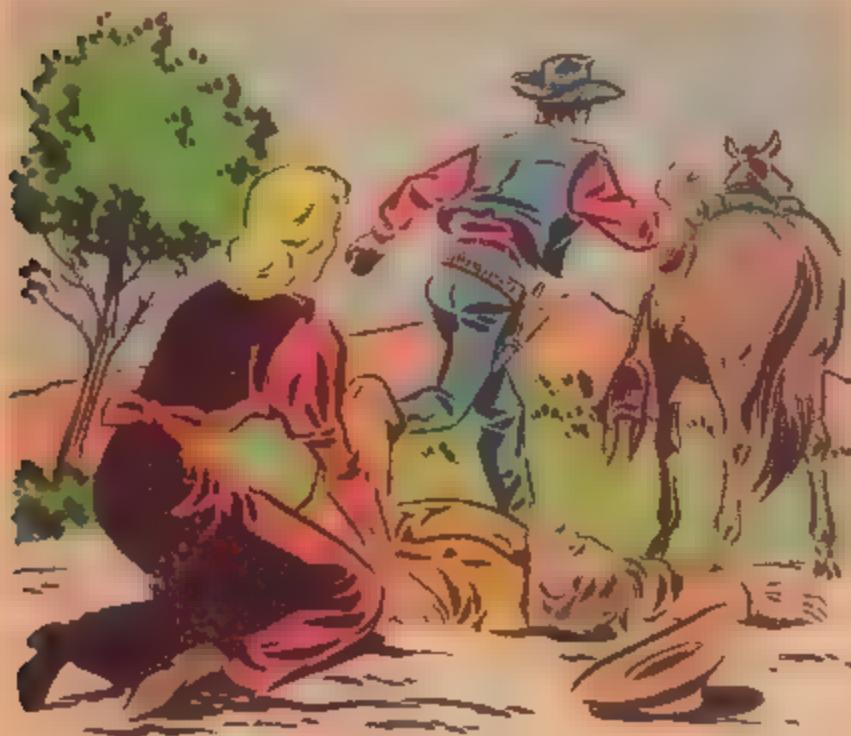
YOU'RE A FOOL AND  
A MURDERER, BENT WADE!



YOUR WIFE IS AS INNOCENT AS YOUR  
BABY DAUGHTER! THE MAN YOU  
JUST KILLED HAS BEEN NOTHING  
BUT THEIR GOOD FRIEND--- SHE  
NEEDED A FRIEND AFTER YOU  
DESERTED HER!



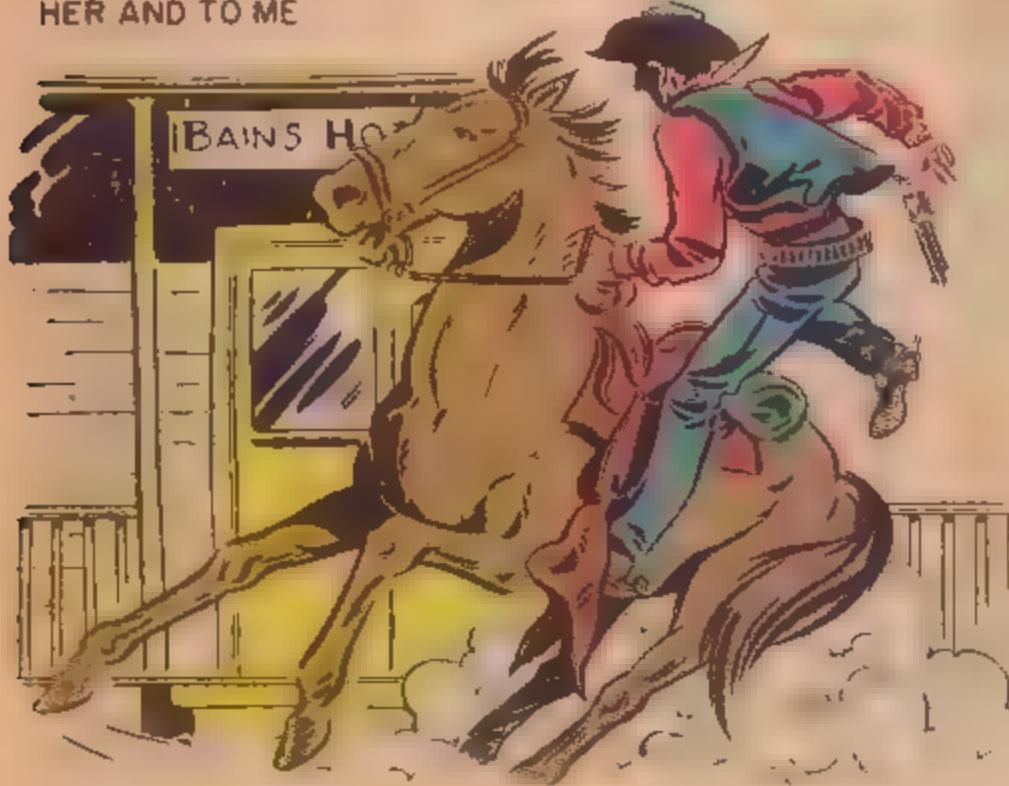
"I COULDN'T FACE LUCY RIGHT THEN! I COULDN'T  
FACE MY OWN CONSCIENCE!"



"ALL THE DEVILS OF DESPAIR AND REVENGE RODE  
WITH ME AS I HEADED FOR DODGE CITY"



"...TO HAVE IT OUT WITH THE MEN WHO HAD LIED TO  
HER AND TO ME"



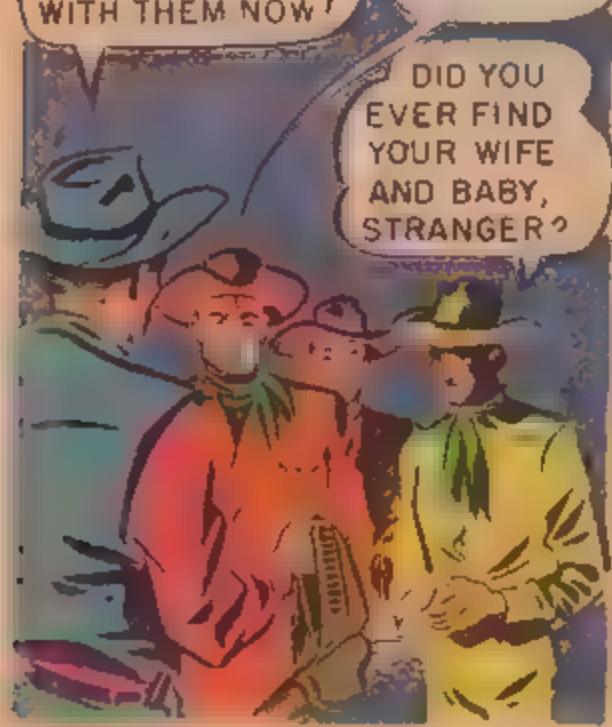
BUT SPENCER BAIN AND CAP FOLSOM HAD  
CLEARED OUT . I COULDN'T LEARN WHERE  
WITHOUT SLEEP OR REST, I RODE BACK  
TO LUCY'S BOARDING PLACE . BUT  
SHE'D LEFT WITH AN EMIGRANT TRAIN'



HERE'S YOUR GUNS,  
BOYS -- I RECKON  
YOU'LL BE SAFE  
WITH THEM NOW!

I RECKON,  
OLD-TIMER!

DID YOU  
EVER FIND  
YOUR WIFE  
AND BABY,  
STRANGER?

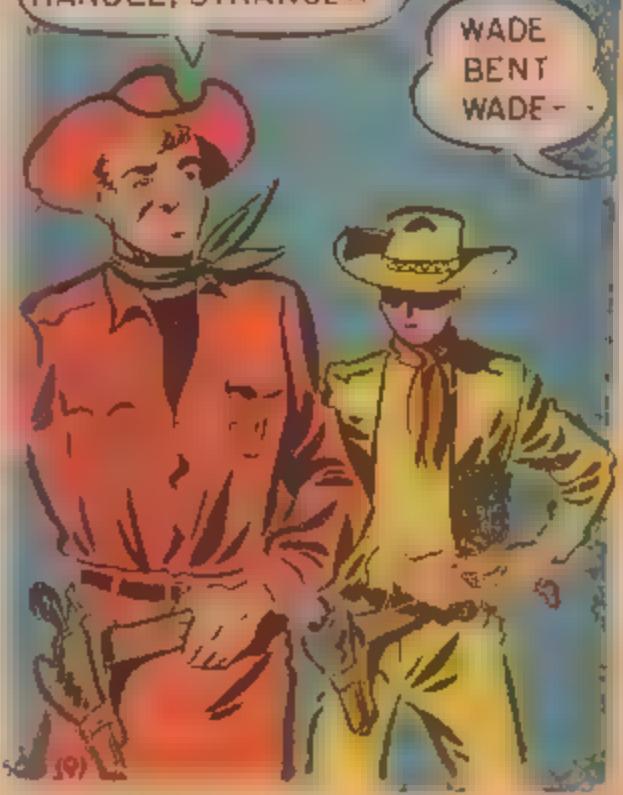


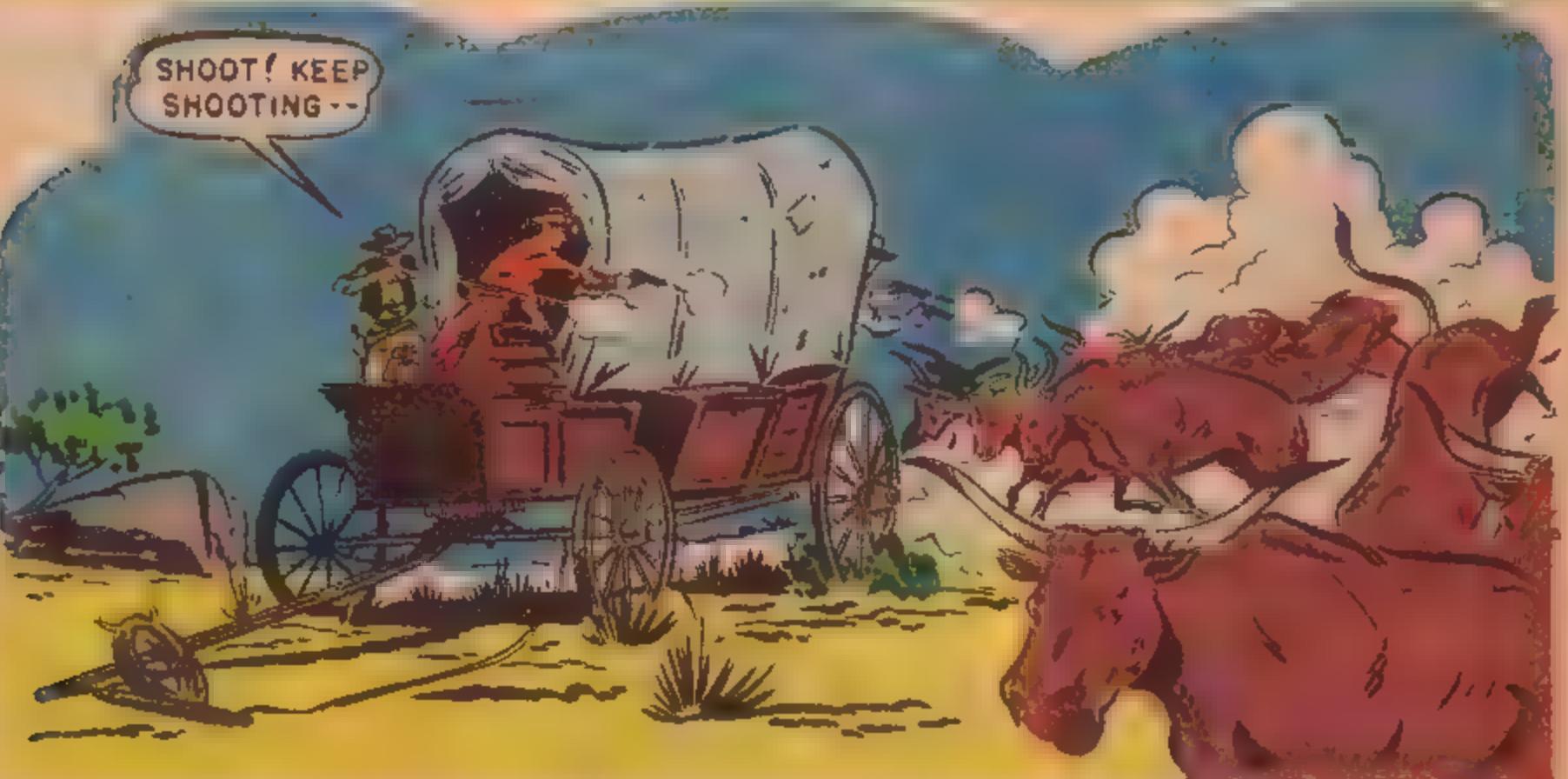
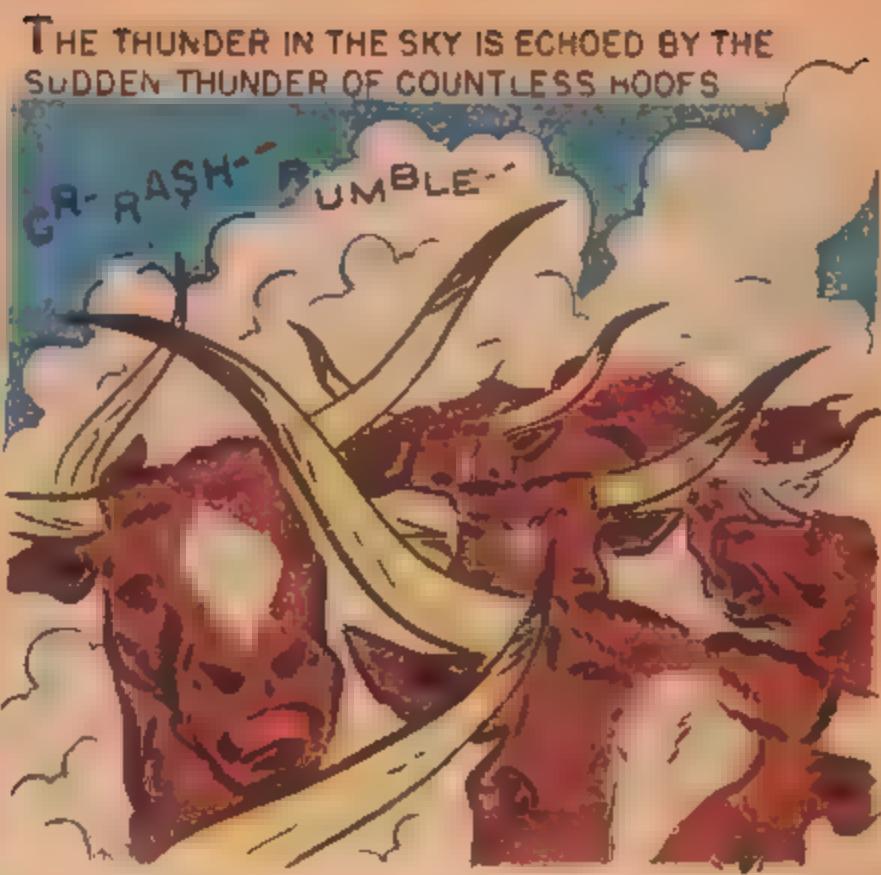
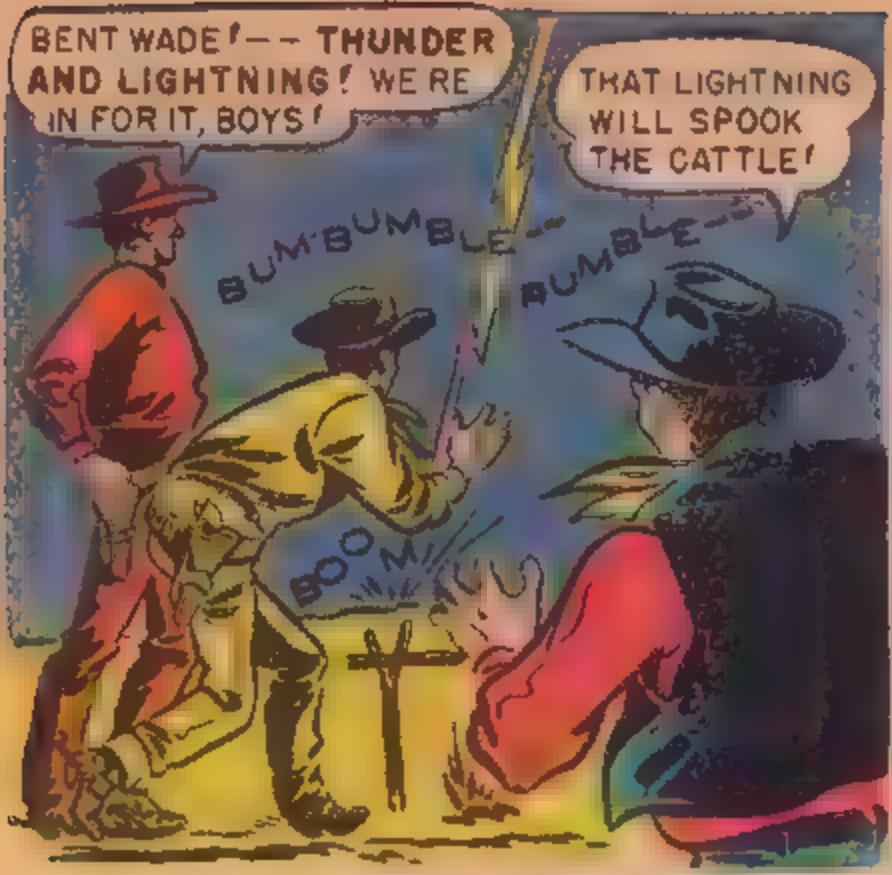
NOT EVER! THE WAGON  
TRAIN WAS WIPED OUT BY  
INJUNS--- MEN FOUND  
EVERY SOUL DEAD-- BUT  
NO TRACE OF THE BABY  
GIRL! SO I'M STILL A-  
HUNTING FOR HER



WHAT'S YOUR  
HANDLE, STRANGER?

WADE  
BENT  
WADE -

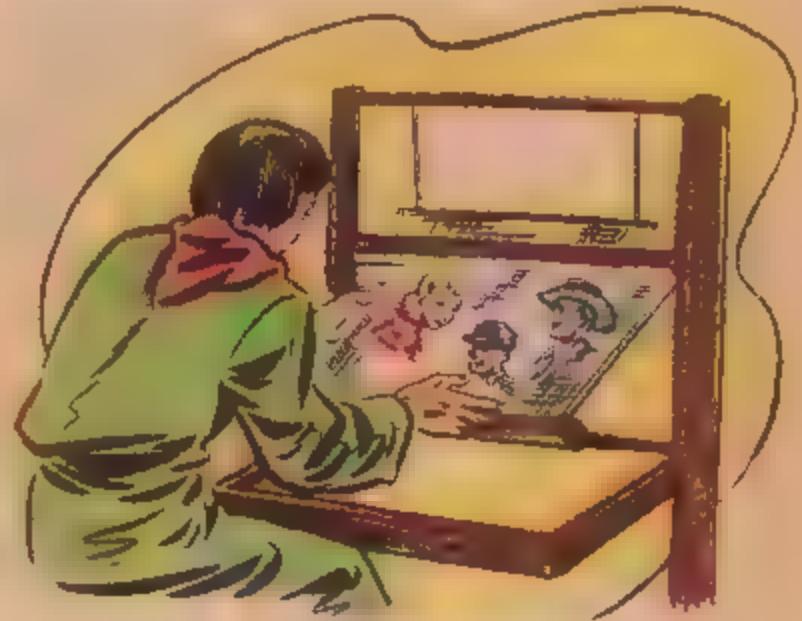




THE WAGON'S CRASH IS LOST IN THE ROAR OF THAT  
LIVING AVALANCHE...



LIFE IS A WEAVER, BRINGING FAR-FLUNG  
THREADS TOGETHER SEE' UPON HIS  
BUSY LOOM OUR PATTERN GROWS  
TRAGIC OR COMICAL, BEAUTEOUS OR  
TERRIBLE, OR DULL AND PLAIN



FROM THE STATE PENITENTIARY COMES ONE  
OF THE STRANGE THREADS, SOON TO ENTER  
THE LIFE-PATTERN OF BENT WADE...



MY TIME'S UP!  
AFTER TODAY, NO  
MORE SCREWS--

QUIET! YOU'LL  
FIND CLOTHES IN  
YOUR CELL--- THEN  
THE WARDEN WANTS  
TO SEE YOU!



... THREE YEARS, JACK  
BELLOUNDS! YOU WOULDN'T  
HAVE BEEN HERE THAT LONG  
IF YOU'D CONTROLLED YOUR  
TEMPER--- WHAT'S ON YOUR  
MIND, NOW THAT YOU'RE  
LEAVING US?

NOTHING--  
EXCEPT THAT  
I'LL BE A FREE  
MAN THE MINUTE  
I'M OUTSIDE!



BELLOUNDS, A SPOILED CHILD THINKS HE IS FREE WHEN A TANTRUM DRIVES HIM TO SCREAM AND DESTROY THINGS --- FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, IF NOT FOR OTHERS --- BE A MAN!



AT KREMMLING, THE NEXT DAY.

JACK BELLOUNDS,  
YUH OL' CURLY WOLF!  
HOW YUH BEEN?

HI-YAH, BERT  
LORRY! IS THE OLD  
TOWN AS DEAD  
AS EVER?



I'M ON MY WAY TO  
WHITESLIDES, BUT I'VE  
GOT SOME TIME TO  
KILL, BERT!

LET'S HAVE  
A DRINK AND  
FIGGER HOW  
TO DO A  
FANCY JOB  
OF IT!



LEAVE IT! WE  
WANT ANOTHER  
DRINK!

BETTER NOT,  
JACK YOU'VE  
HAD TOO  
MUCH!

GIMME--  
OR I'LL  
KILL YUH!

O--OKAY  
TAKE IT! NO  
OFFENSE--



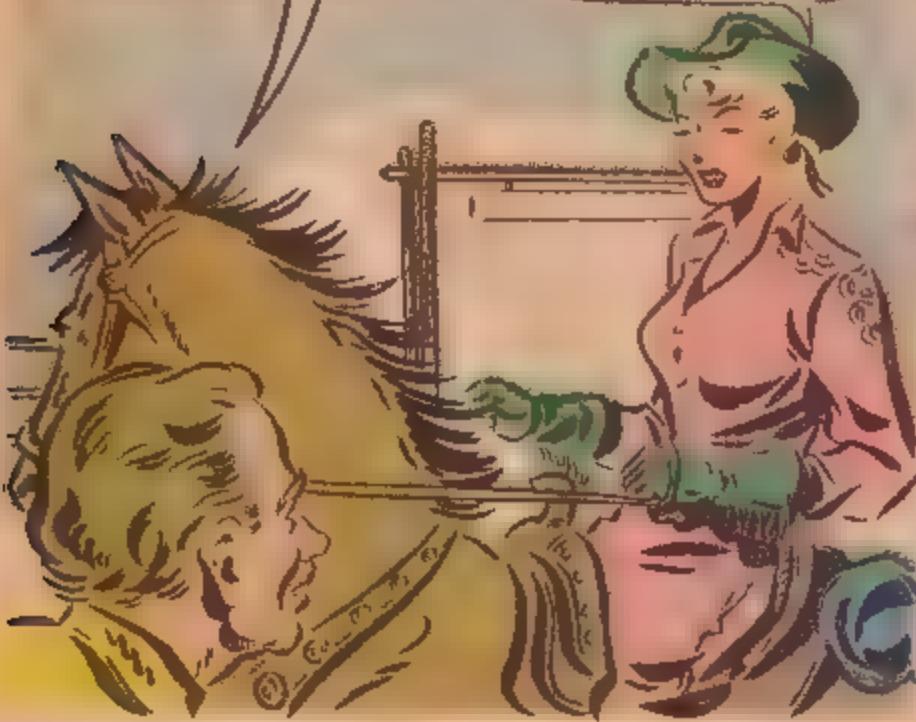
THAT SAME DAY, AT HIS RANCH  
UNDER THE SLOPE OF OLD  
WHITESLIDES, BILL BELLOUNDS  
RECEIVES A LETTER . . .

IT'S FROM THE  
WARDEN! HE SAYS---  
HE SAYS JACK--WILL  
BE COMING HOME! MY  
BOY--HE'LL BE HOME  
TOMORROW!



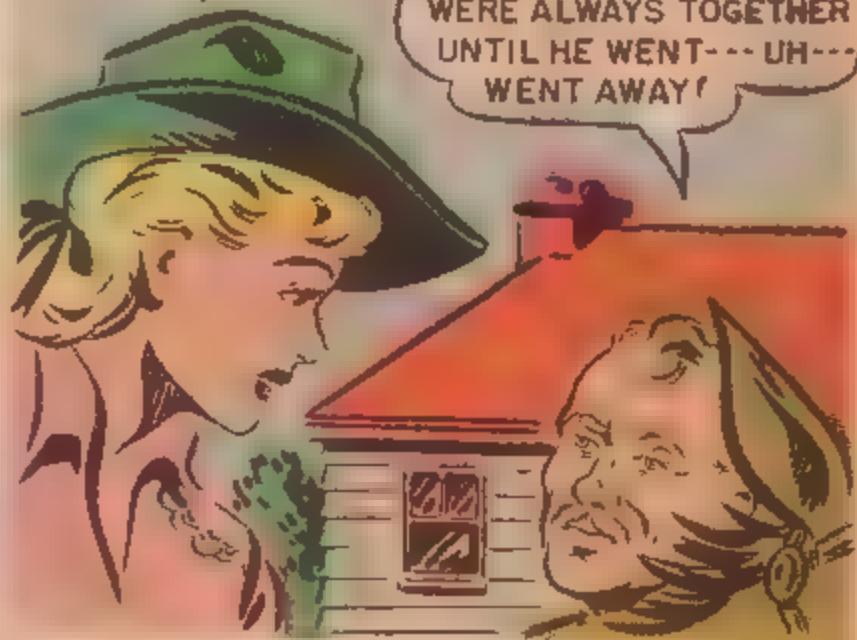
COLLIE! C'M HERE!  
I'VE GOT GREAT NEWS!

NEWS? OH, DAD!  
YOU MEAN JACK IS  
COMING HOME?



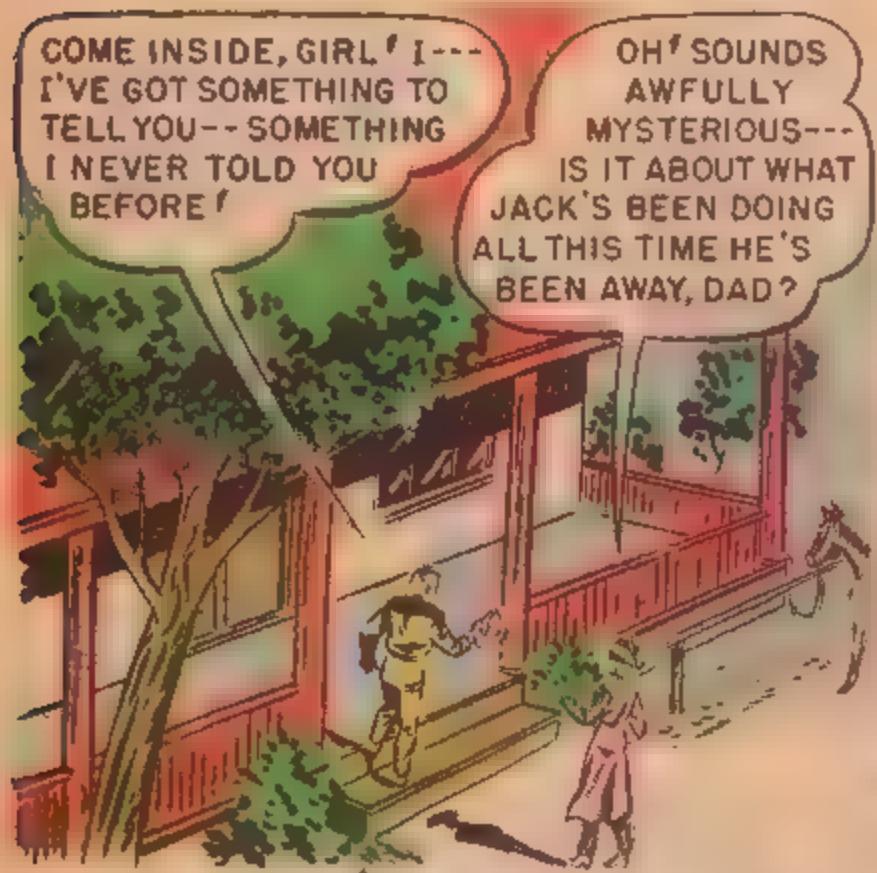
DAD! I'M SO GLAD---  
ESPECIALLY FOR YOU'  
YOU'VE MISSED HIM  
TERRIBLY!

I HAVE, COLLIE---  
AND I'M KIND OF  
SURPRISED THAT  
YOU HAVEN'T,  
SEEING YOU TWO  
WERE ALWAYS TOGETHER  
UNTIL HE WENT---UH---  
WENT AWAY!



COME INSIDE, GIRL! I---  
I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO  
TELL YOU-- SOMETHING  
I NEVER TOLD YOU  
BEFORE!

OH! SOUNDS  
AWFULY  
MYSTERIOUS---  
IS IT ABOUT WHAT  
JACK'S BEEN DOING  
ALL THIS TIME HE'S  
BEEN AWAY, DAD?



COLLIE, I---I DON'T KNOW  
HOW TO BEGIN---BUT THE  
TIME'S COME WHEN YOU  
HAVE GOT TO KNOW--I'M  
NOT YOUR REAL DAD!

YOU--- YOU---  
I DON'T KNOW  
WHAT YOU MEAN!



LISTEN, HONEY! IT'S A SAD  
STORY, BUT A SHORT ONE---  
SOME MEN THAT WERE  
WORKING ONE OF MY MINING  
CLAIMS IN THE MOUNTAINS  
FOUND YOU SEVENTEEN  
YEARS AGO--- YOUR FOLKS  
DIED WHEN THE INJUNS  
WIPE OUT A WAGON  
TRAIN!

AND YOU BROUGHT  
ME UP AS YOUR  
VERY OWN! OH,  
DAD-- I LOVE YOU  
ALL THE MORE  
FOR THAT!

I'M GLAD,  
COLUMBINE---  
MIGHTY GLAD!  
BECAUSE  
THEN YOU  
WON'T REFUSE  
THE ONE BIG THING  
I'VE EVER ASKED  
YOU-- I WANT YOU  
AND JACK TO  
MARRY---SOON!

MARRY--- MARRY  
JACK? BUT, DAD--  
I DON'T LOVE HIM!



NEXT MORNING..

WELL, BOYS, HERE COMES THE FIRE-EATIN' HEIR OF WHITESLIDES RANCH, JACK BELLOUNDS!

FIRE-DRINKIN' YOU MEAN, LEM--- SOMEBODY CARTED HIM HOME LAST NIGHT IN A BUCKBOARD! HE AIN'T CHANGED ANY!

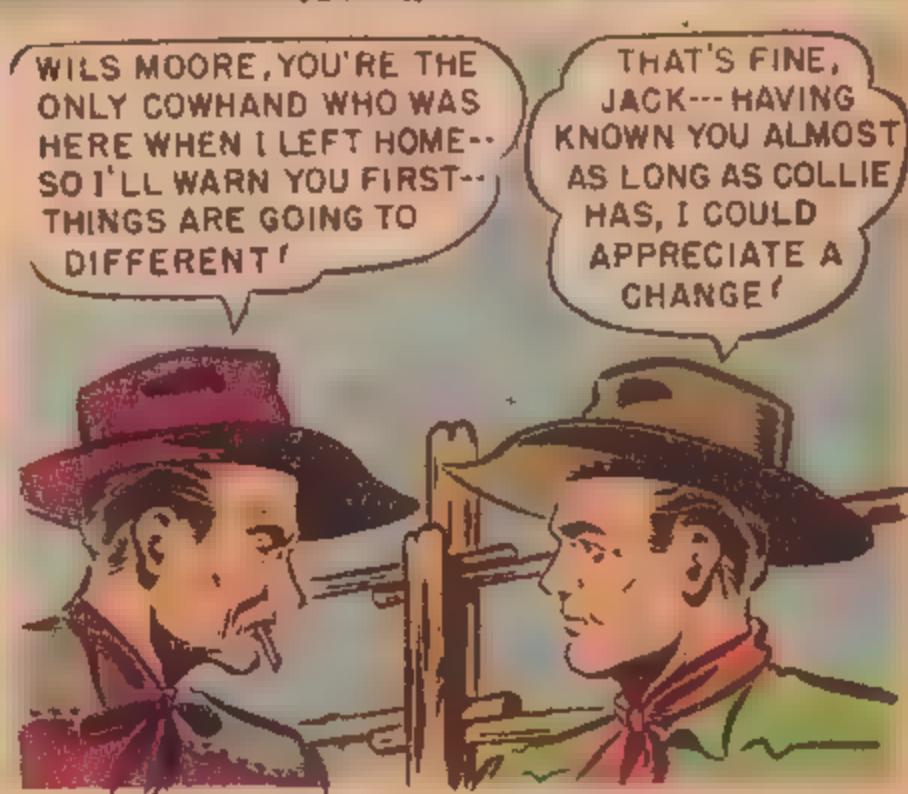
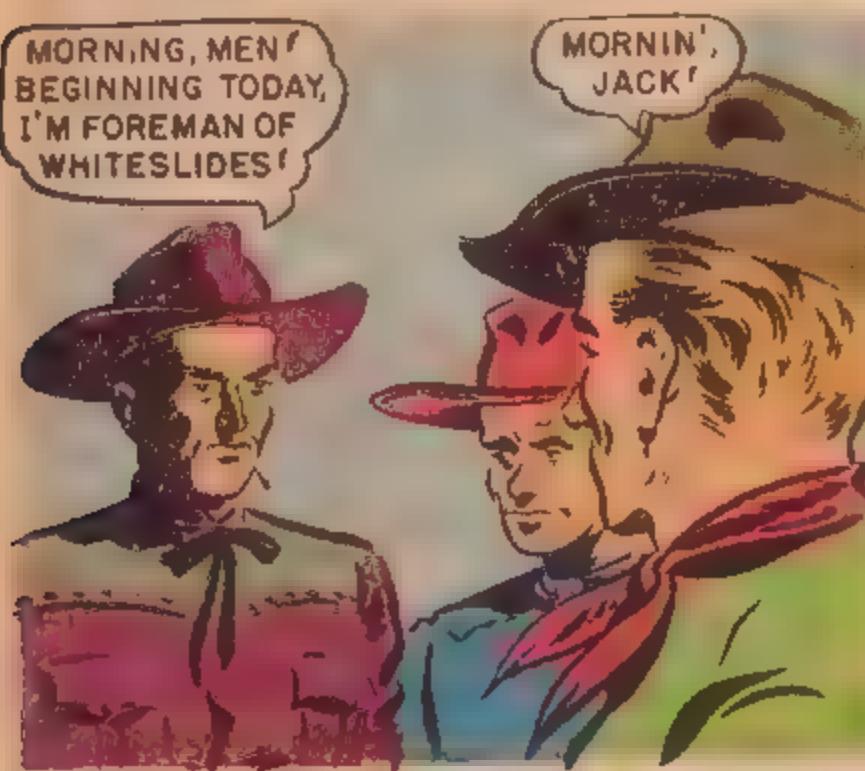


MORNING, MEN!  
BEGINNING TODAY,  
I'M FOREMAN OF  
WHITESLIDES!

MORNIN',  
JACK!

WILS MOORE, YOU'RE THE ONLY COWHAND WHO WAS HERE WHEN I LEFT HOME-- SO I'LL WARN YOU FIRST-- THINGS ARE GOING TO DIFFERENT!

THAT'S FINE,  
JACK--- HAVING KNOWN YOU ALMOST AS LONG AS COLLIE HAS, I COULD APPRECIATE A CHANGE!



DON'T GET THE IDEA YOU CAN IMPOSE ON 'OLD TIMES', COWBOY! I'LL HIRE AND I'LL FIRE, REGARDLESS--- AND MY RIDERS ARE GOING TO WORK-- NOT STAND AROUND HOLDING UP THE CORRAL RAILS!

WHOSE HALF-BROKE CAYUSE IS THIS?  
STAND STILL, YOU!

I SAID STAND!---  
YOU WALLEYED JACKASS! I'LL TEACH YOU!





BOYS! JACK! WHAT  
IN THUNDERATION IS  
GOING ON HERE?

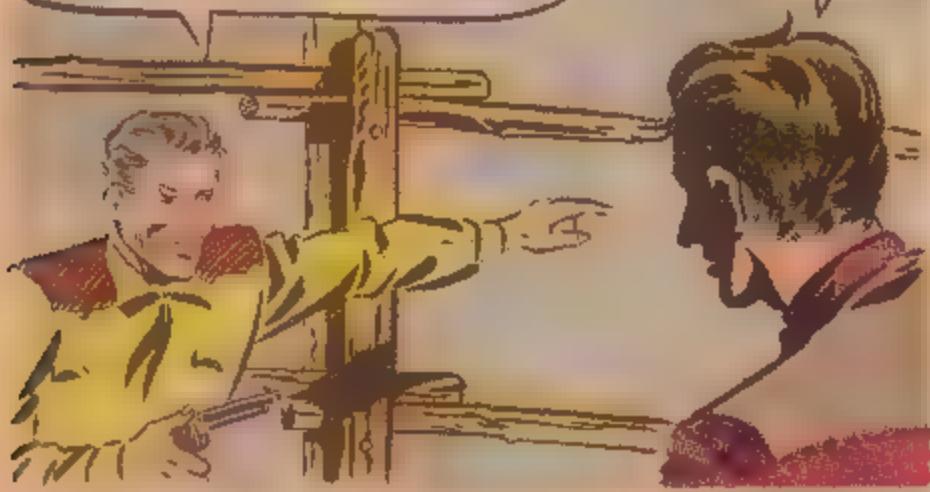
GIVE ME THAT, YOU  
HYDROPHOBIA PUP! I  
HOPED IT WOULD MAKE  
A MAN OF YOU TO---  
TO BE AWAY---



GET INTO THE HOUSE! AND  
DON'T LET ME--OR ANYBODY--  
SEE YOUR FACE TILL YOU'VE  
COME TO YOUR SENSES! GIT!

WHOSE GUN  
IS THIS?

IT'S JIM BLUDSOE'S, BOSS--  
BUSTER JACK GRABBED IT  
TO SHOOT WILS MOORE--  
AND DANGED NEAR DID'



WHAT WAS  
THE RUCKUS  
ABOUT, JIM?

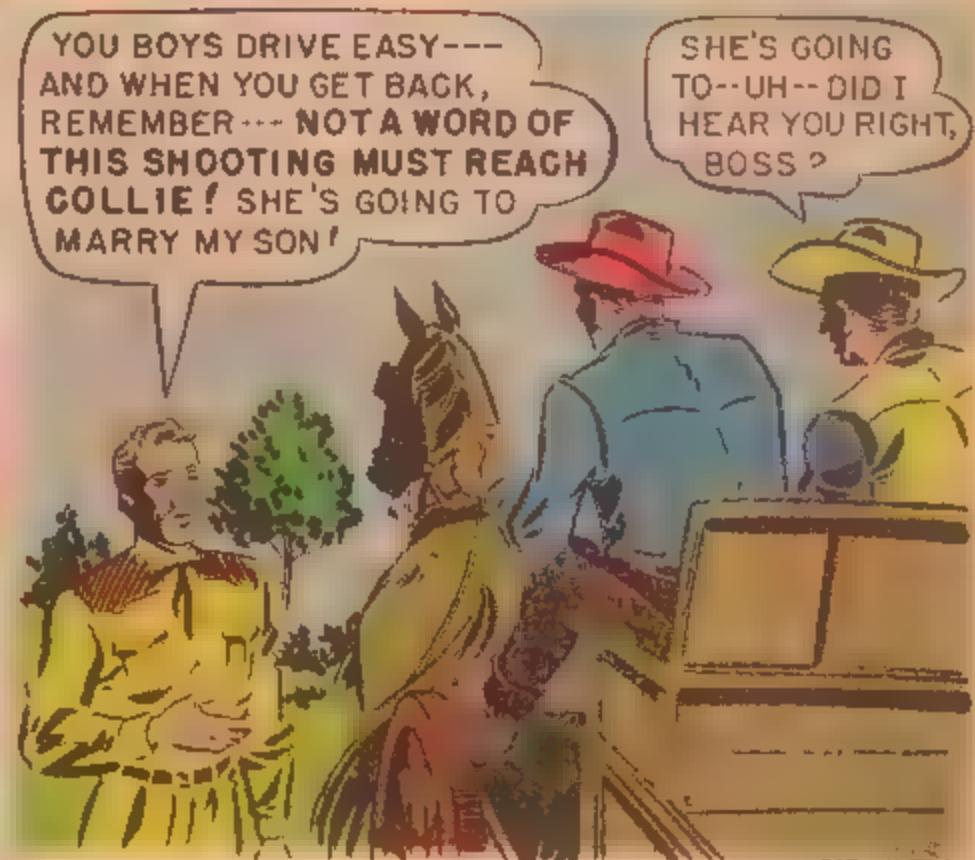
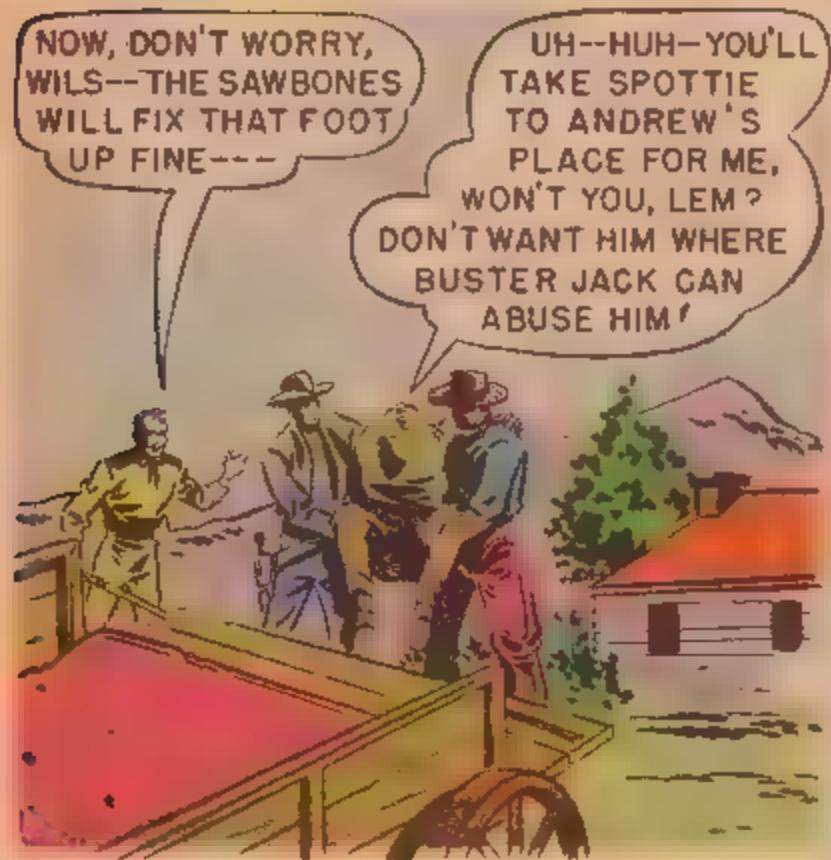
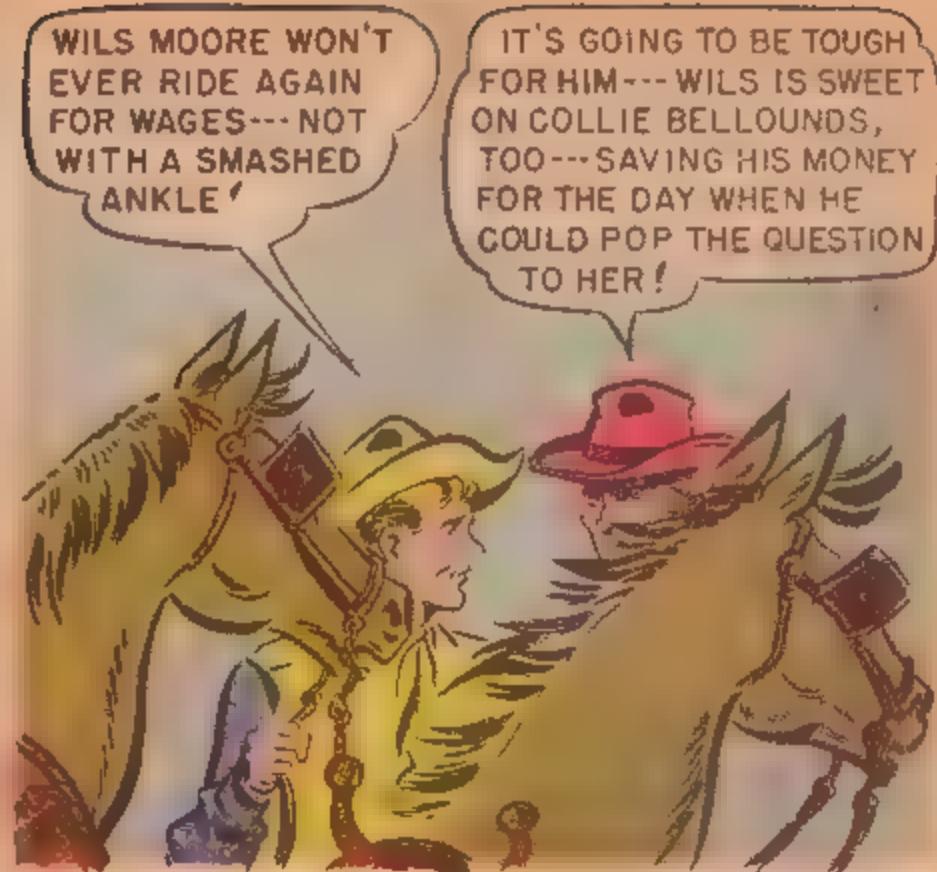
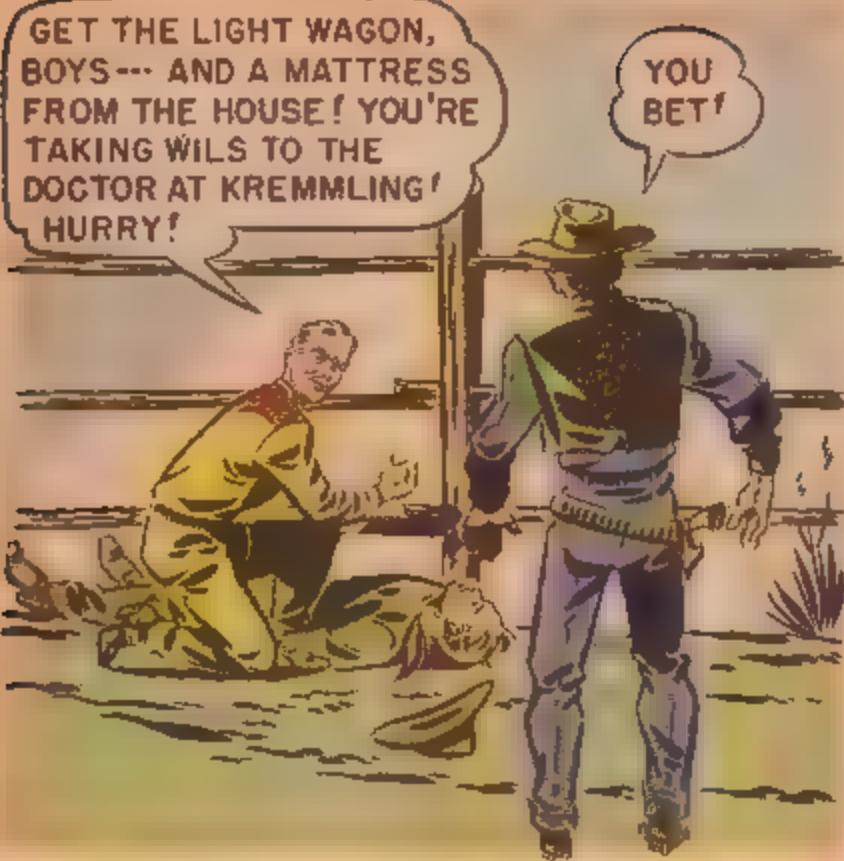
WILSON'S HOSS---  
JACK STARTED TO  
TAKE OUT HIS MAD  
ON SPOTTIE, AND  
WILS TOLD HIM TO  
QUIT IT-- THEN JACK  
SWUNG ON HIM-- AND  
GOT KNOCKED BACK--  
THAT'S WHEN JACK  
GRABBED MY GUN,  
AND ALMOST---

WILS!  
WHAT--?

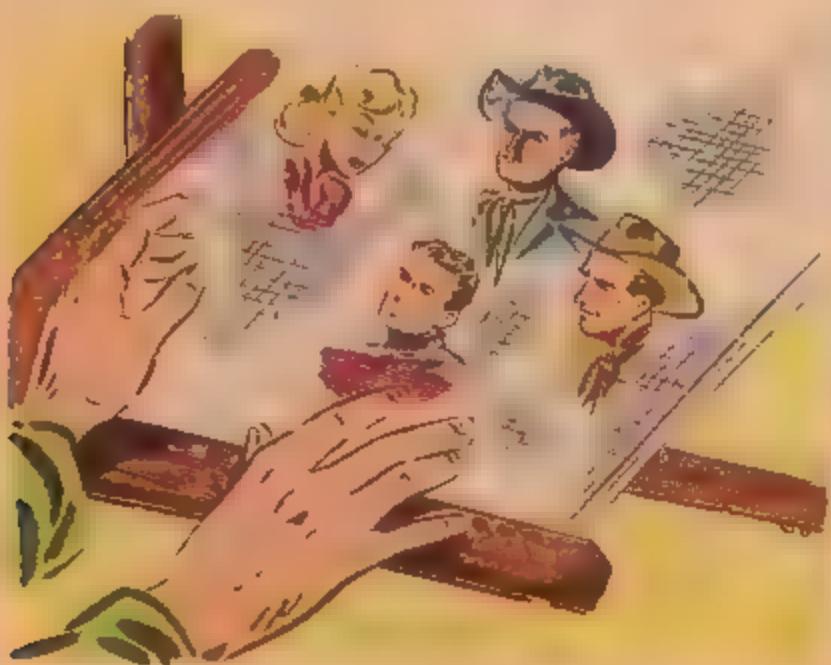
HE WAS  
HIT!

IT'S HIS FOOT!  
BULLET DRILLED  
PLUMB THROUGH  
THE ANKLE BONE!

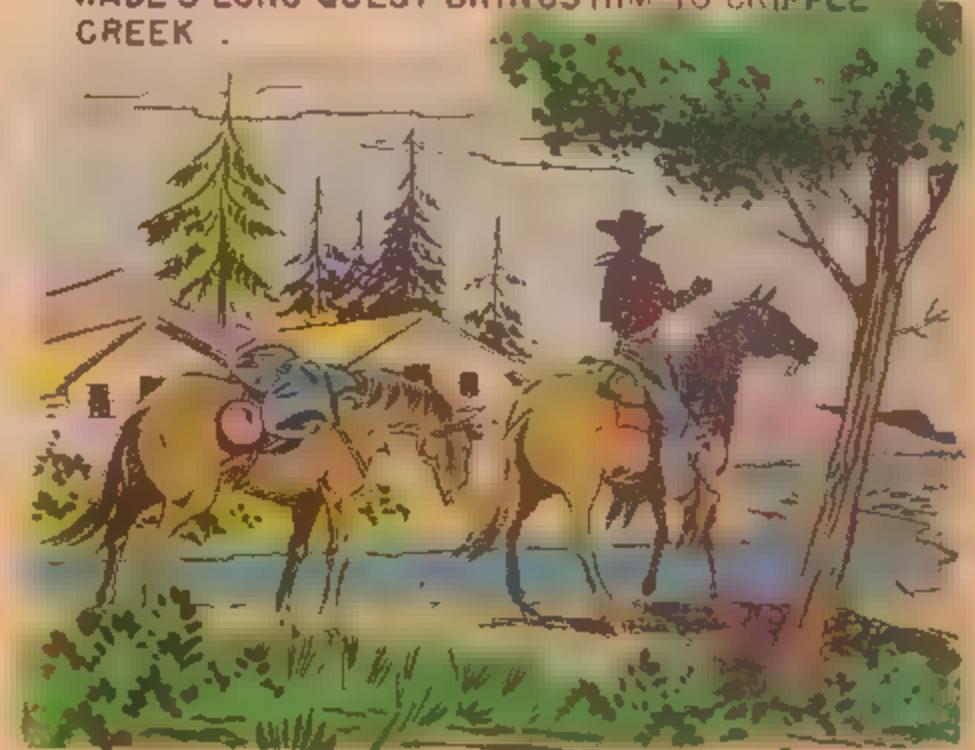




THE SHUTTLE FLASHES, AND EACH  
SEPARATE STRAND IS BOUND  
FOREVER IN THE WEAVER'S  
WEB ...



ON THE DAY OF WILS MOORE'S SHOOTING, BENT  
WADE'S LONG QUEST BRINGS HIM TO CRIPPLE  
GREEK.

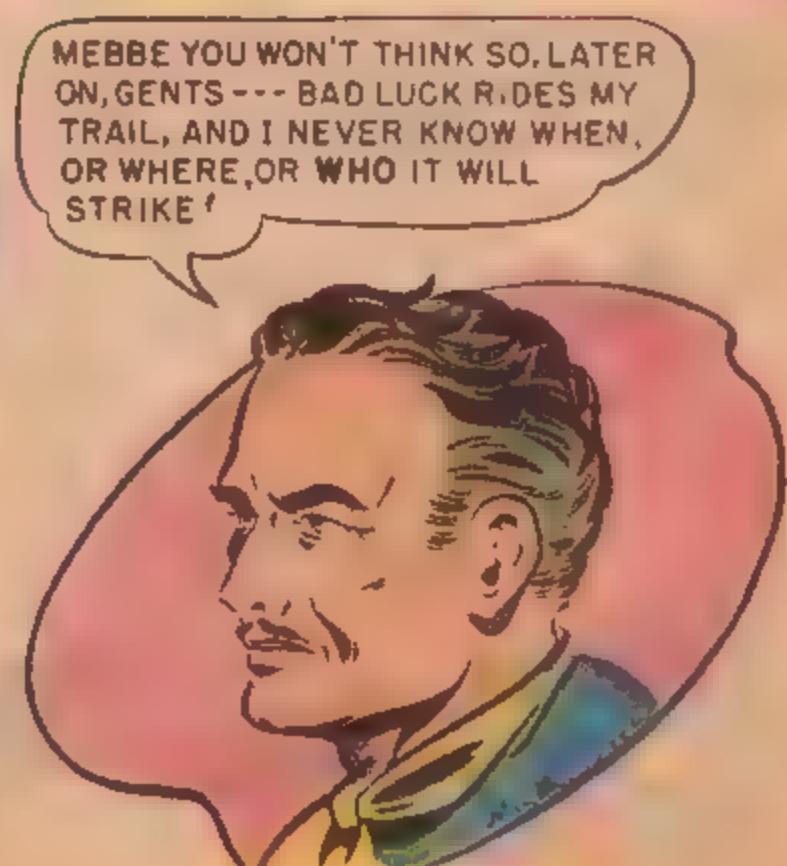


HOWDY, GENTS' I HEARD THAT  
YOU WERE LOOKING FOR A  
CAMP COOK, AND I FIGGERED  
I MIGHT QUALIFY!

IF YOU'RE ANY KIND  
OF A COOK, YOU SURE  
CAN, MISTER!

PANNIN' GOLD IS  
HARD WORK--AND WE  
BEEN LIVIN' ON NOTHIN'  
BUT BEANS!

THEN MAYBE SOME JUICY DEER  
STEAKS WOULDN'T TASTE TOO  
BAD--I KILLED THIS BUCK  
AT SUNUP!



BOYS, NOW THAT BENT WADE IS HERE TO SEE NOBODY JUMPS OUR CLAIMS, WE CAN TAKE A TRIP TO TOWN AND BANK OUR GOLD DUST'

GOOD IDEA, ROCHE--

WE GOT A SCALE HERE--- LET'S DIVIDE UP THE DUST TONIGHT, AND EACH MAN PACK HIS OWN WHEN WE TAKE THE STAGE FOR TOWN TOMORROW!

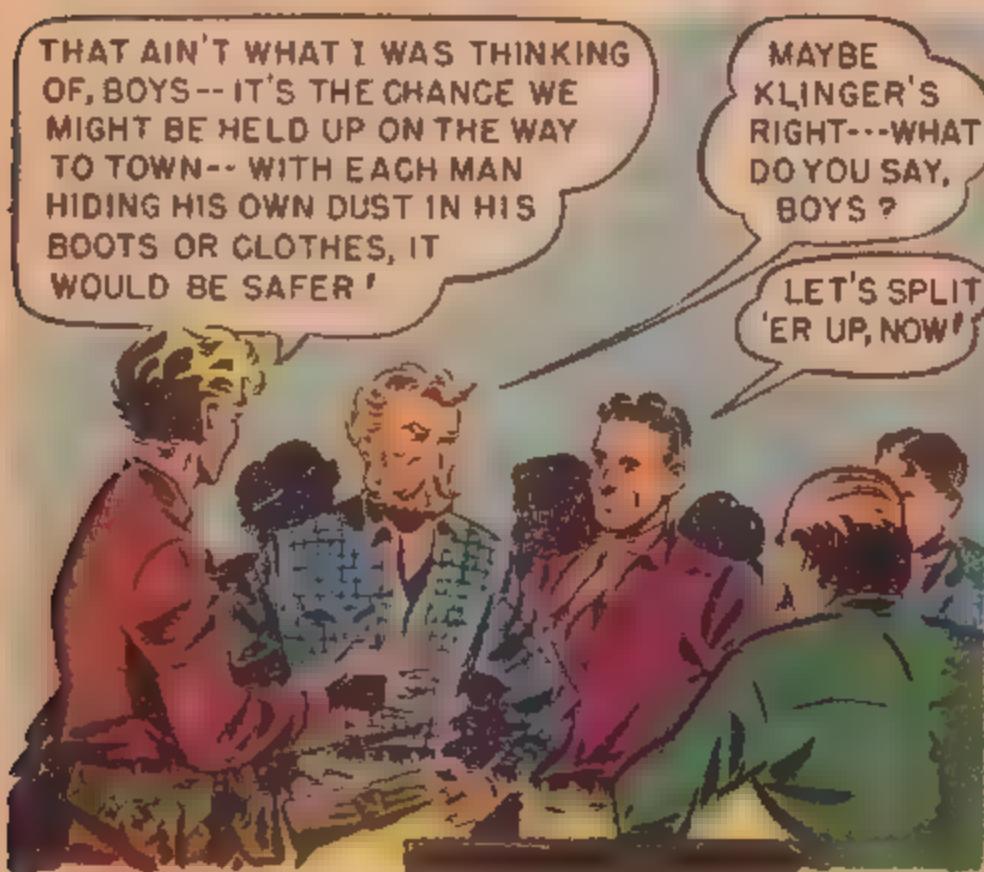
COULDN'T THE BANK WEIGH THE WHOLE LOT AND FIGGER THE FIVE PARTS EASIER, KLINGER? NOT THAT IT'S ANY OF MY BUSINESS---



THAT AIN'T WHAT I WAS THINKING OF, BOYS-- IT'S THE CHANCE WE MIGHT BE HELD UP ON THE WAY TO TOWN-- WITH EACH MAN HIDING HIS OWN DUST IN HIS BOOTS OR CLOTHES, IT WOULD BE SAFER'

MAYBE KLINGER'S RIGHT---WHAT DO YOU SAY, BOYS?

THAT'S THE LAST OF IT--- AND SHE TOTALS TWO HUNDRED FORTY-ONE OUNCES THAT'S FORTY-EIGHT AND ONE FIFTH OUNCES APIECE' NOT BAD FOR SIX WEEKS WORK, PARTNERS'



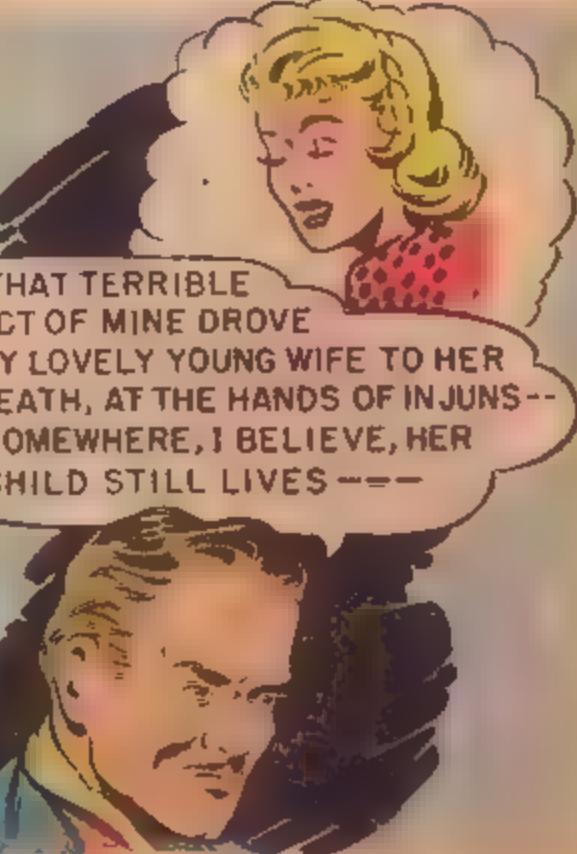
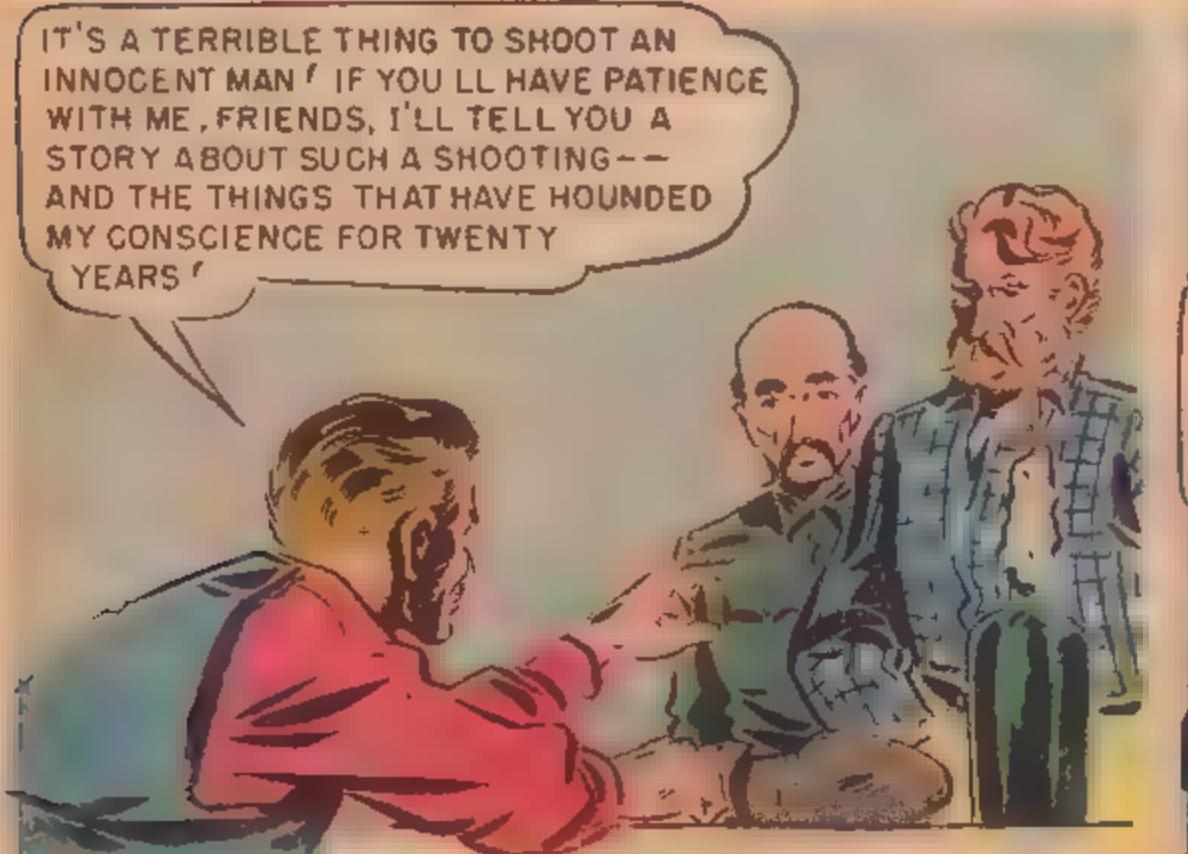
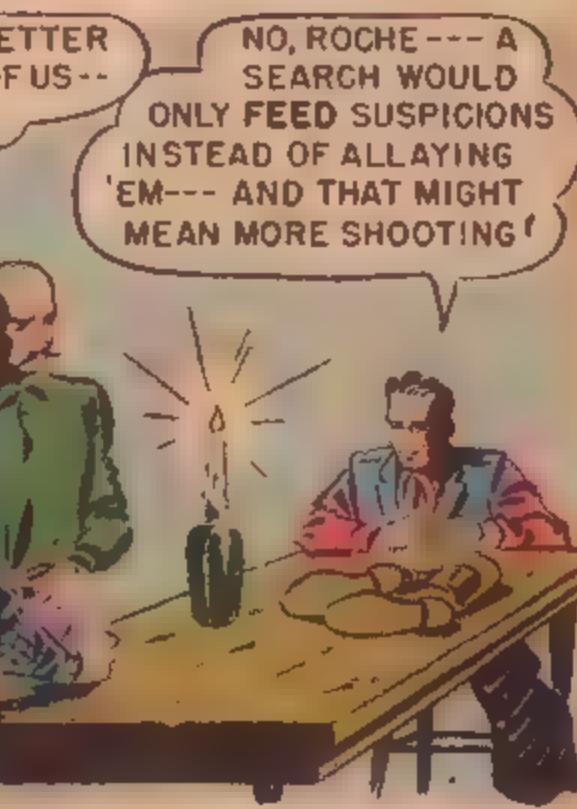
I'LL PUT MINE IN MY BOOT--

JUST A SECOND, KLINGER'

WHAT'S THE IDEA, ROCHE, STOPPING ME--

TWO IDEAS, KLINGER--- AND THEY STRUCK ME BOTH AT ONCE! FIRST, YOU SUGGESTED THIS DIVISION. SECOND, YOU'VE BEEN WALKING AS IF YOUR BOOTS WERE TOO HEAVY!





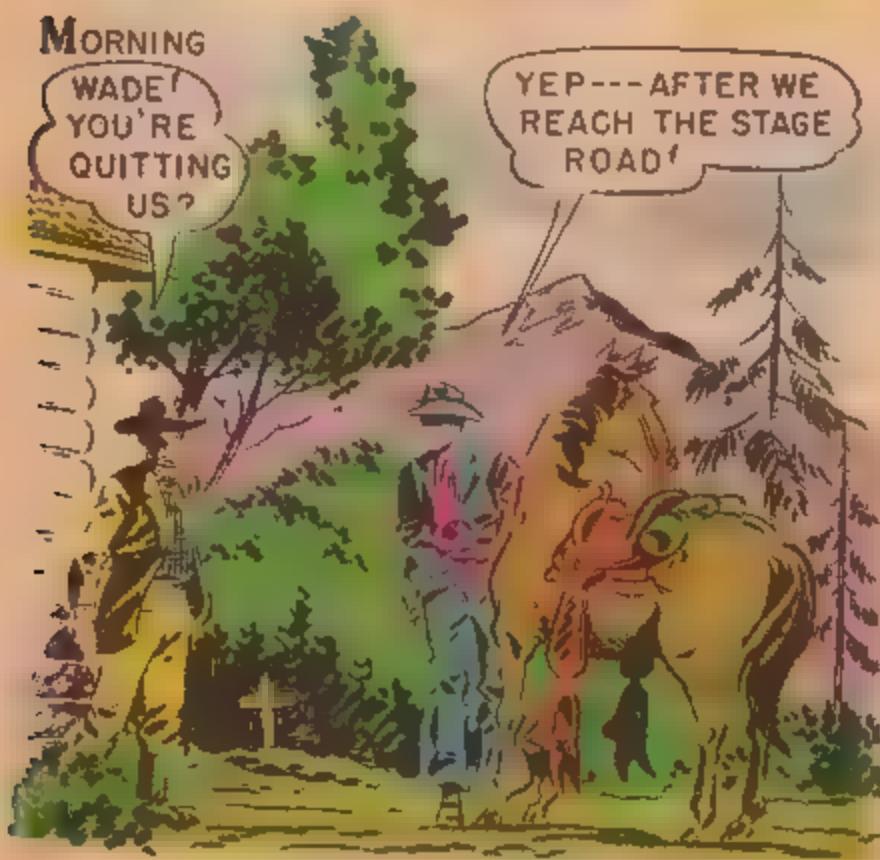
I HAD A QUEER FEELING, GENTS--  
THAT I MIGHT NOT HAVE ANOTHER  
CHANCE TO ASK YOU-- IF YOU'VE  
EVER HEARD OF SUCH A  
FOUNDLING CHILD---



I HAVEN'T--- THAT'S A  
TERRIBLE STORY, BENT  
WADE--- AND I RECKON WE'LL ALL  
BE GLAD WHEN WE REACH THE END  
OF THE STAGE LINE WITH OUR GOLD  
TOMORROW! NOW, LET'S GET OUR  
SHOVELS, AND PLANT KLINGER!



MORNING  
WADE!  
YOU'RE  
QUITTING  
US?



YEP--- AFTER WE  
REACH THE STAGE  
ROAD!

STAY WITH US, WADE,  
AND WE'LL GIVE YOU  
KLINGER'S SHARE  
OF THE DUST---

--- AND JUST ABOUT  
ANYTHING ELSE YOU  
ASK! WE NEED A  
COOK THAT BAD!

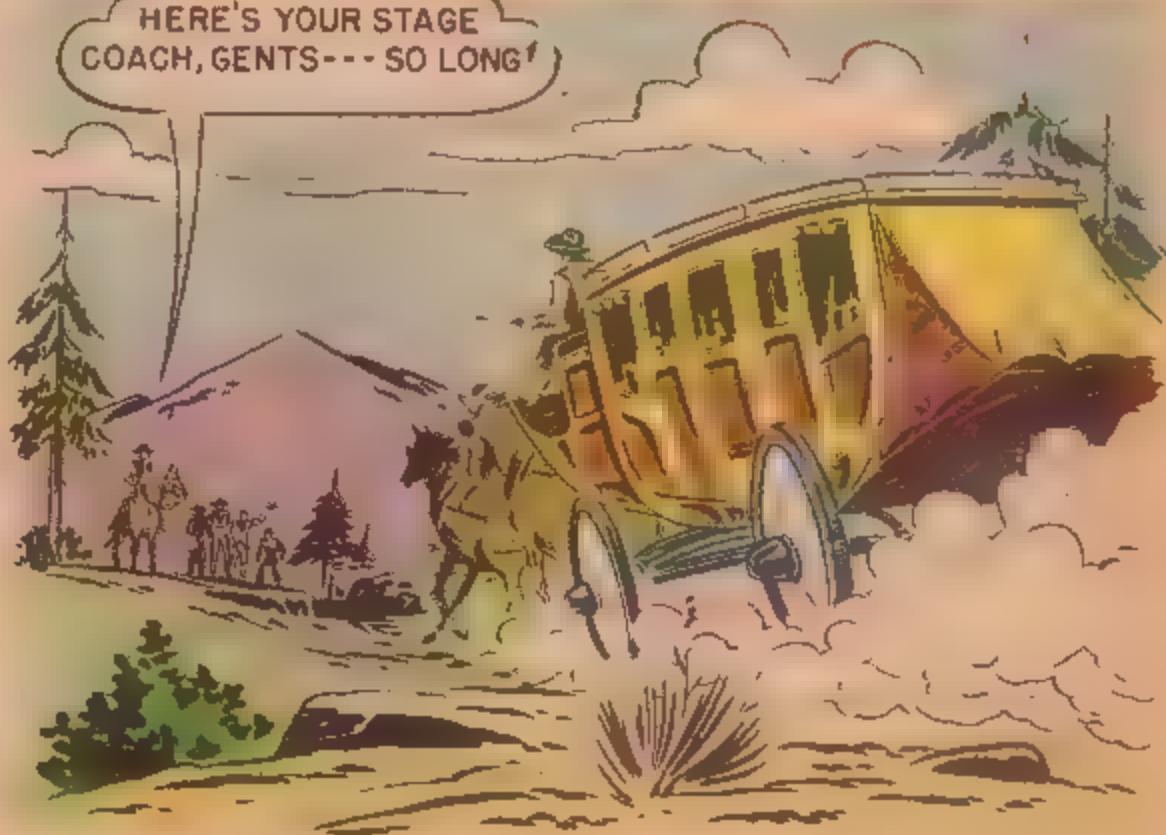
THANKS, GENTLEMEN.  
YOU'RE OFFERING MORE  
THAN I DESERVE---



--- BUT IT'S NO USE!  
THE OLD TRAIL IS CALLING  
TO ME, AND I'VE GOT TO  
BE RIDING ON!



HERE'S YOUR STAGE  
COACH, GENTS--- SO LONG!



I'VE GOT A QUEER HUNCH  
MEBBE I SHOULD HAVE TOLD  
'EM ABOUT THE STRANGE  
TRACKS I FOUND UNDER THE  
CABIN WINDOW THIS MORNING---

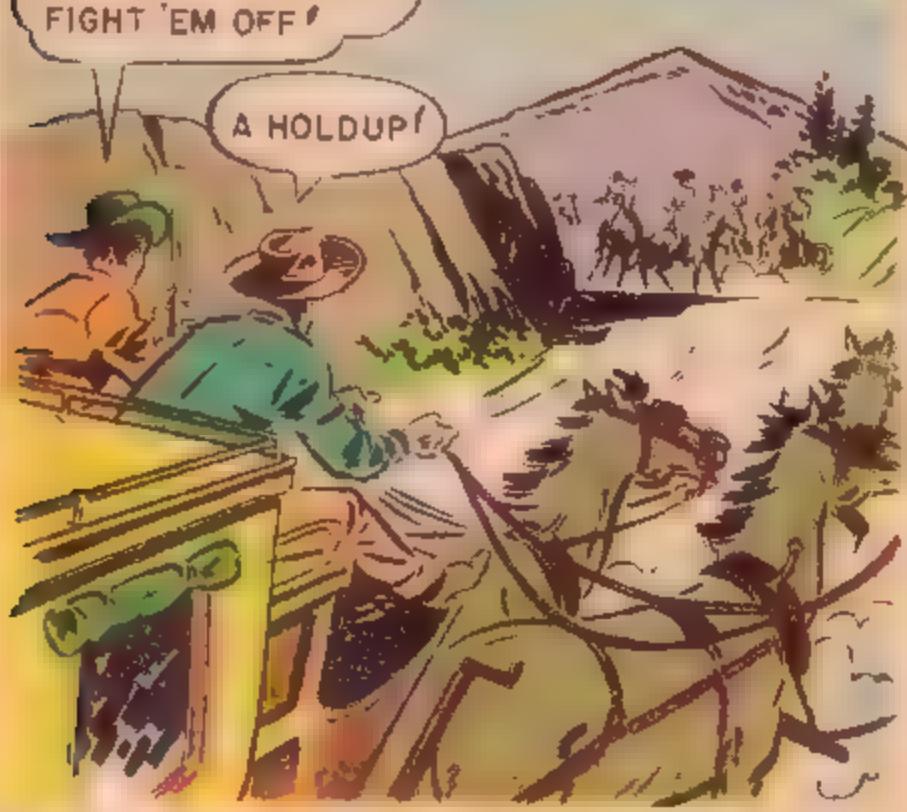


I'M GOING TO FOLLOW  
THAT STAGE, SO IF ANYTHING  
DOES HAPPEN--



DON'T STOP--WE'LL  
FIGHT 'EM OFF!

A HOLDUP!

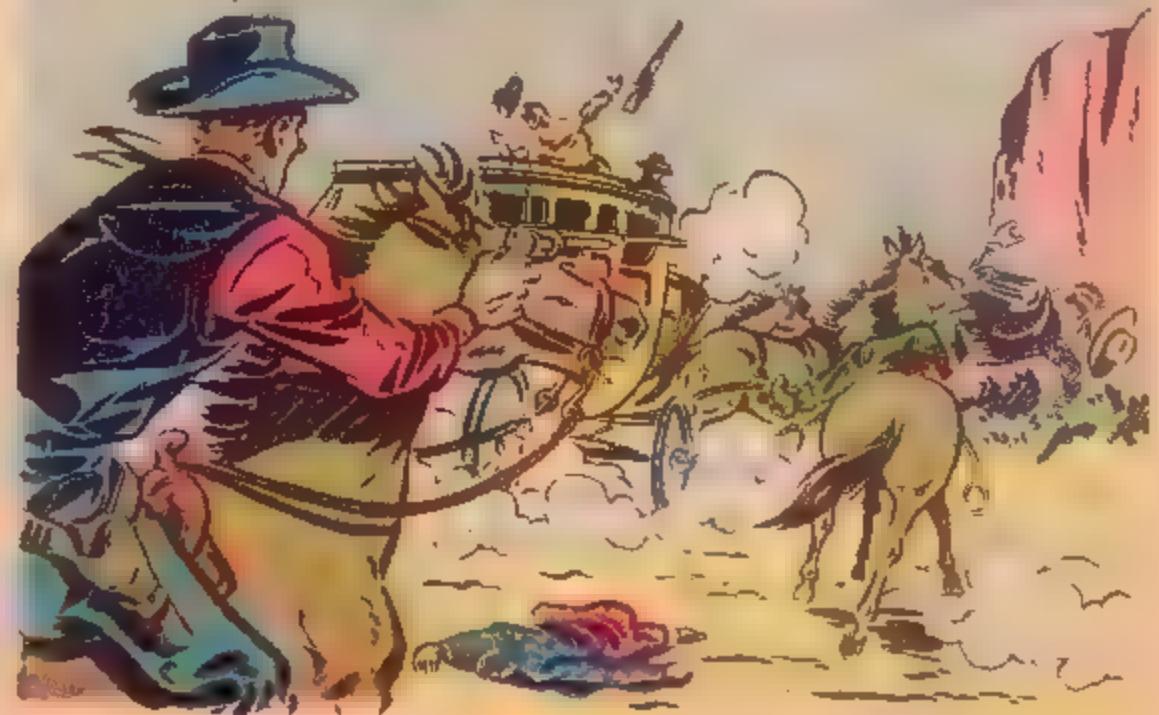


YI-EEEE!



I KNEW IT! GUNFIRE AHEAD!  
IT'S THE LUCK THAT DOGS  
MY TRAIL!

MEBBE I CAN EVEN  
THE ODDS--

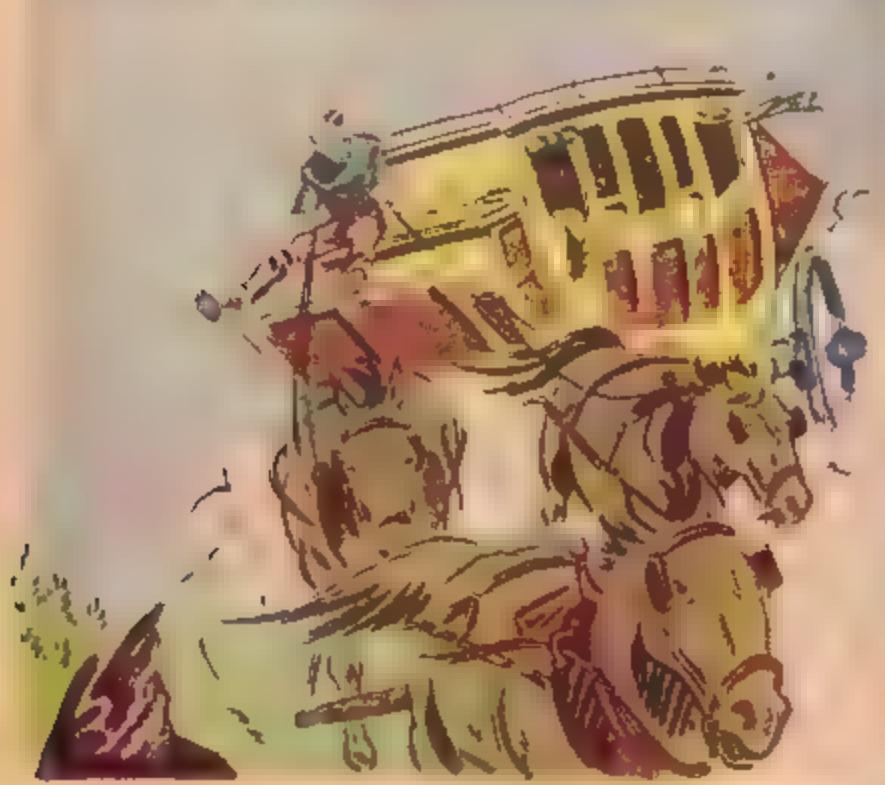




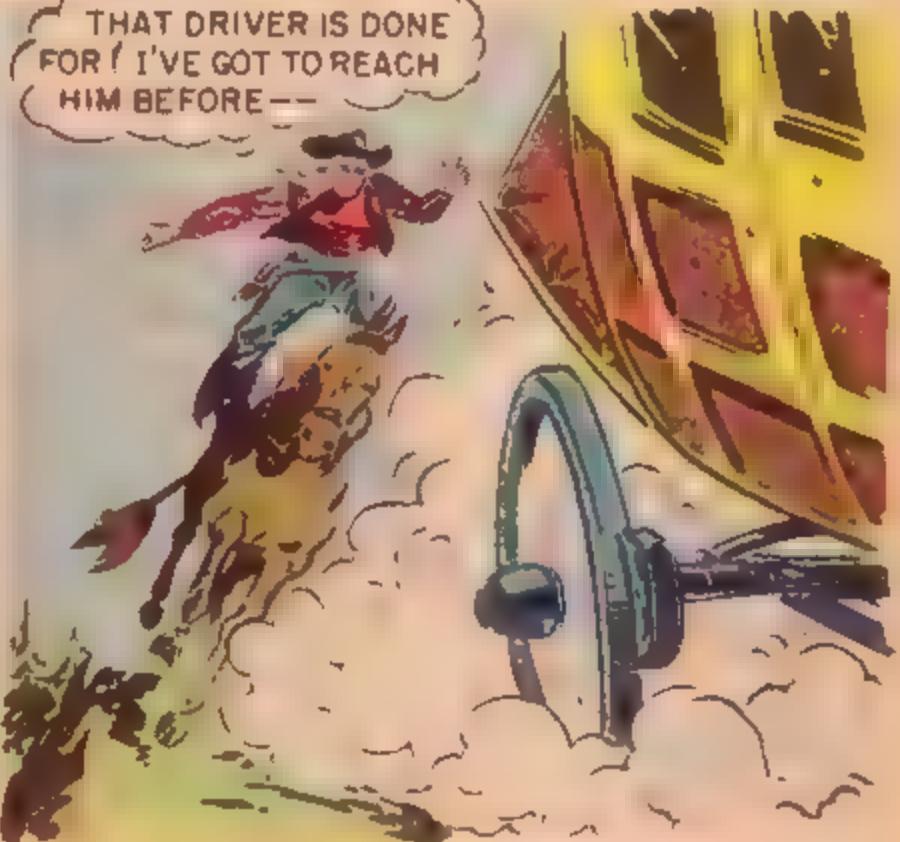
THAT'S THE LAST OF 'EM---  
AND IT'LL BE THE LAST OF THE  
STAGE COACH IF I DON'T  
CATCH IT QUICK!



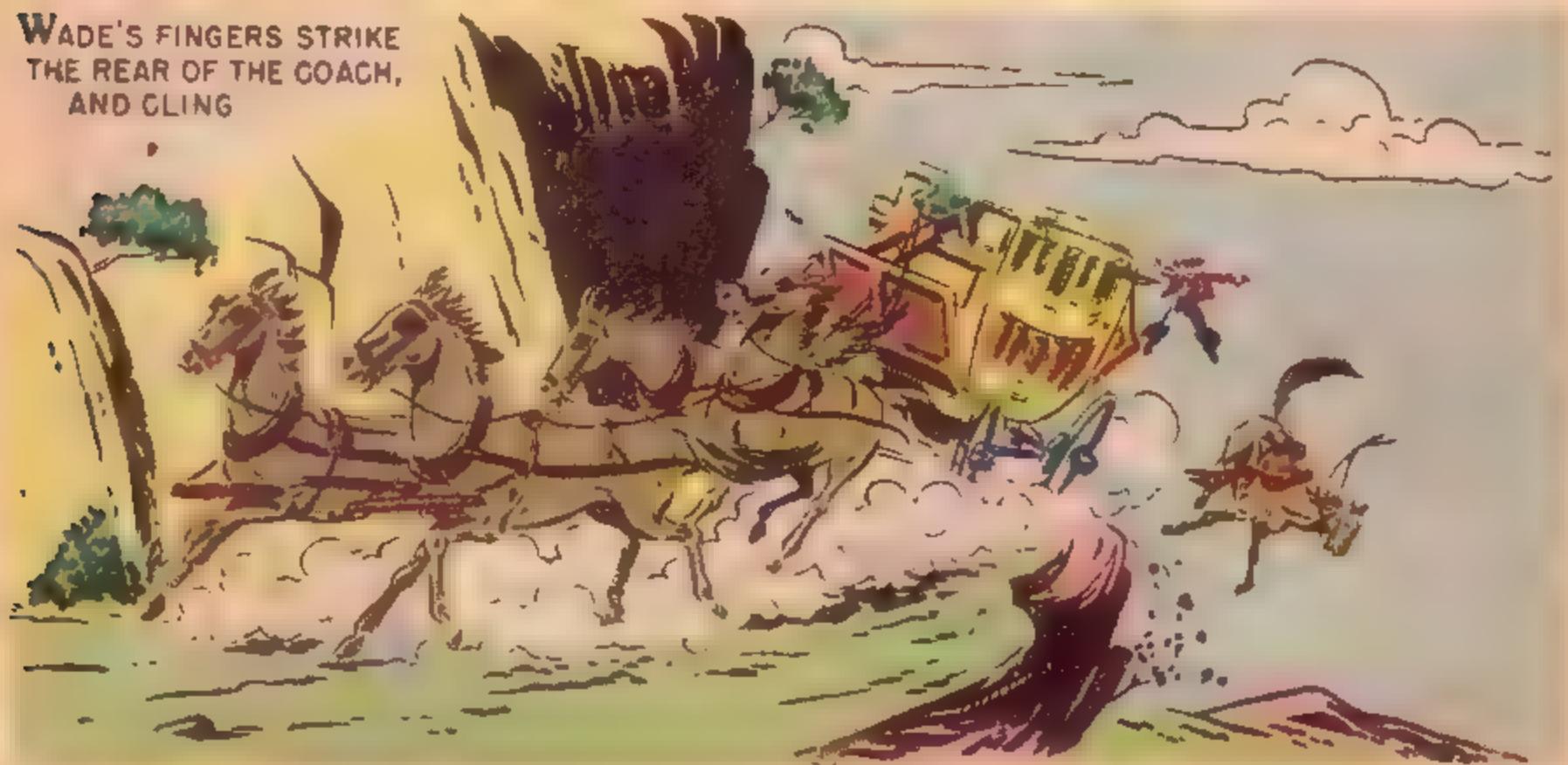
THE STAGE ROCKETS INTO A CANYON TRAIL



THAT DRIVER IS DONE  
FOR! I'VE GOT TO REACH  
HIM BEFORE--

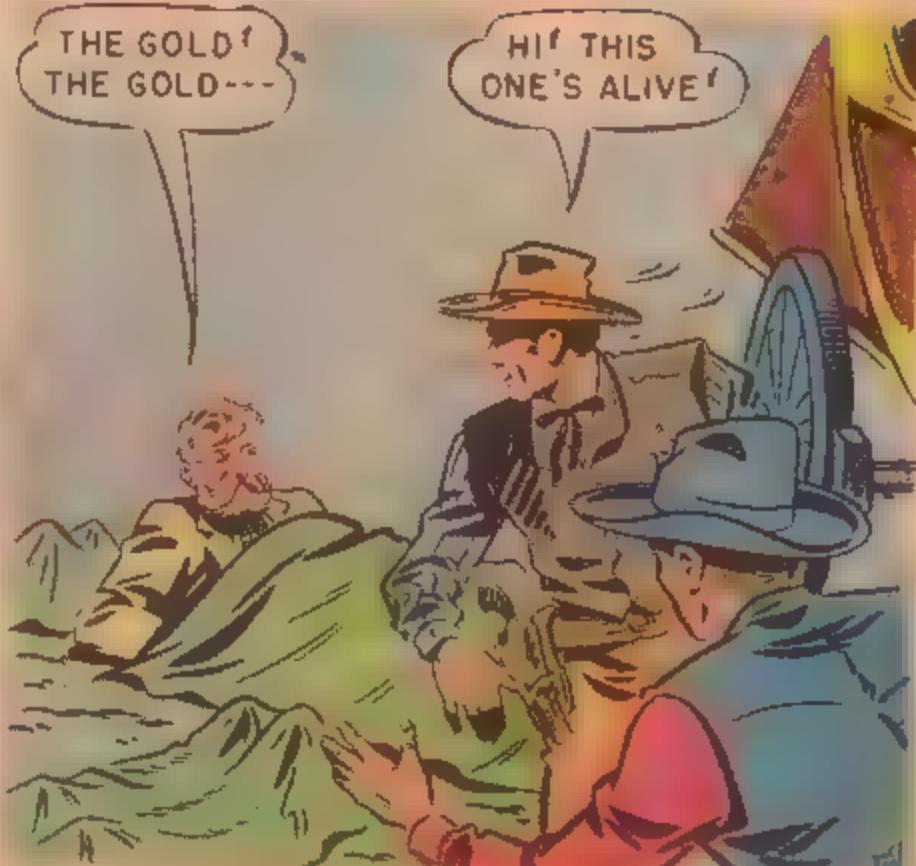
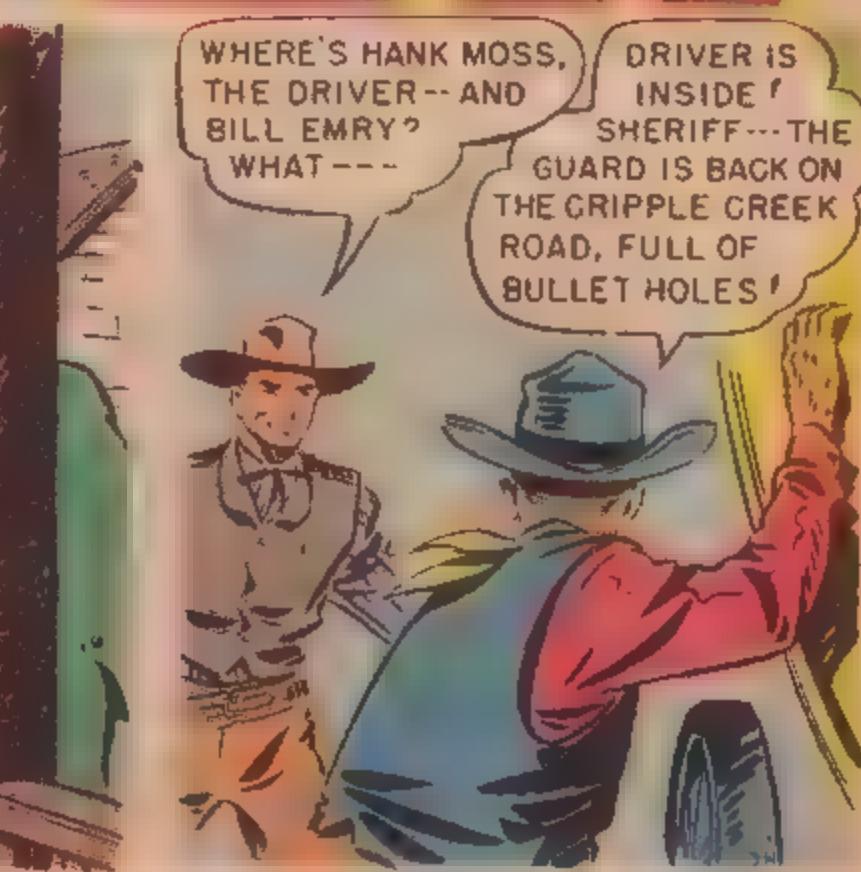
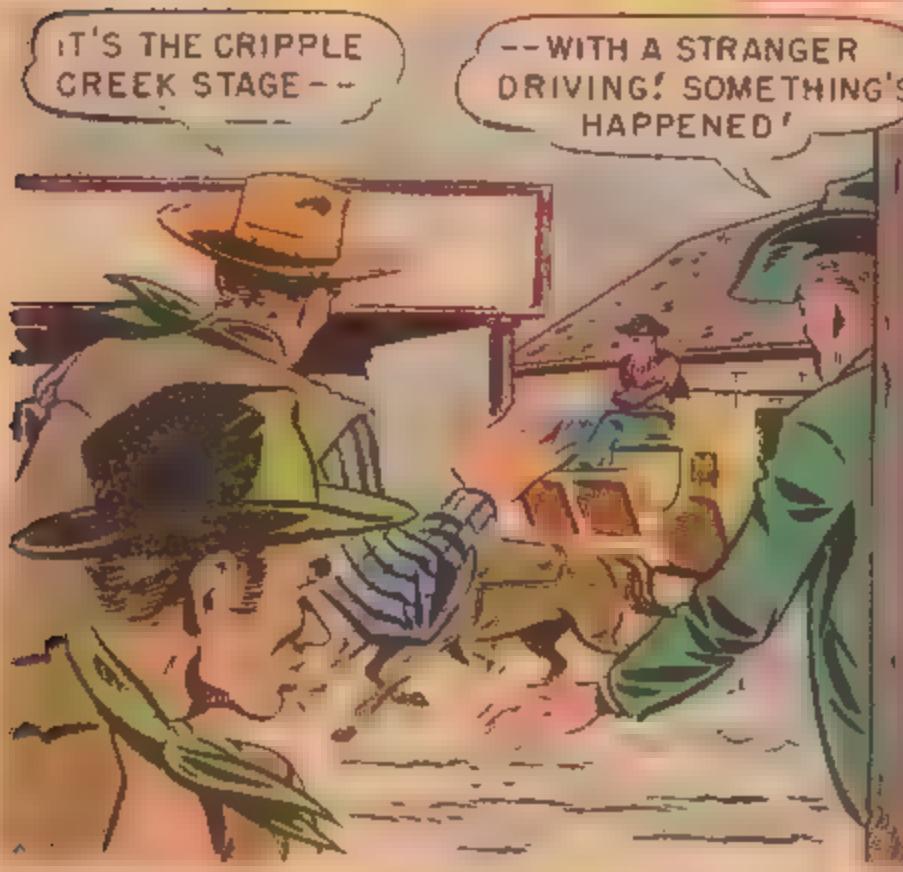
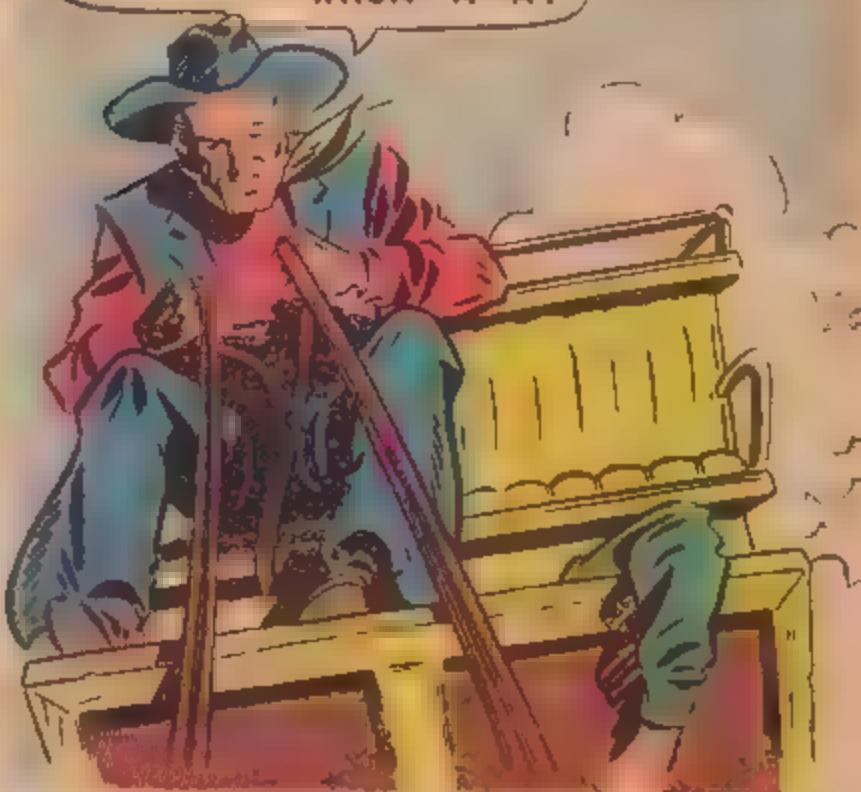


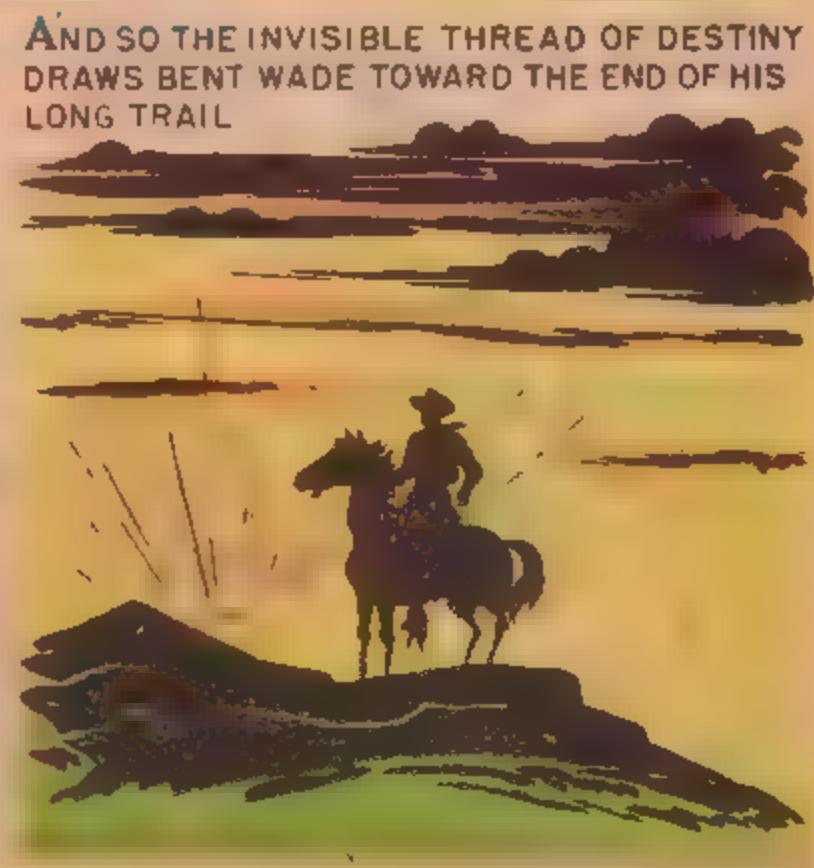
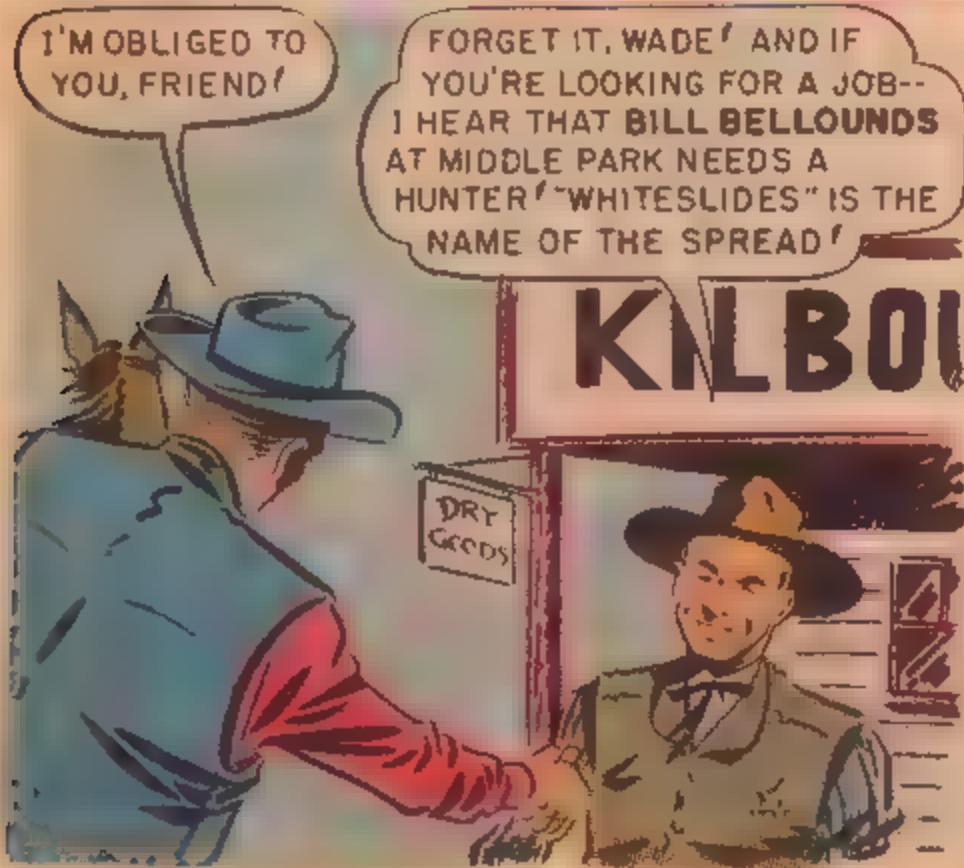
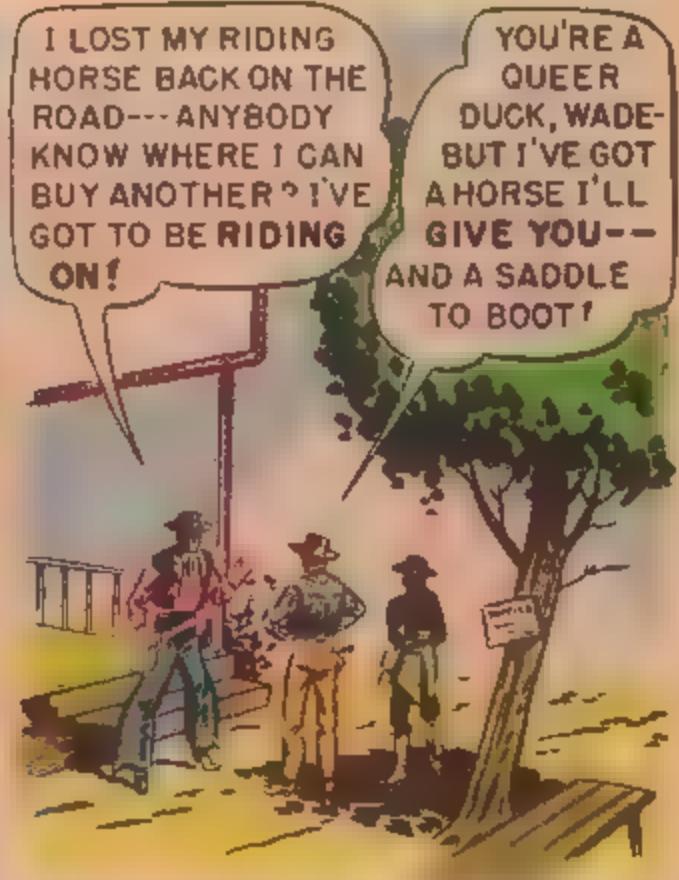
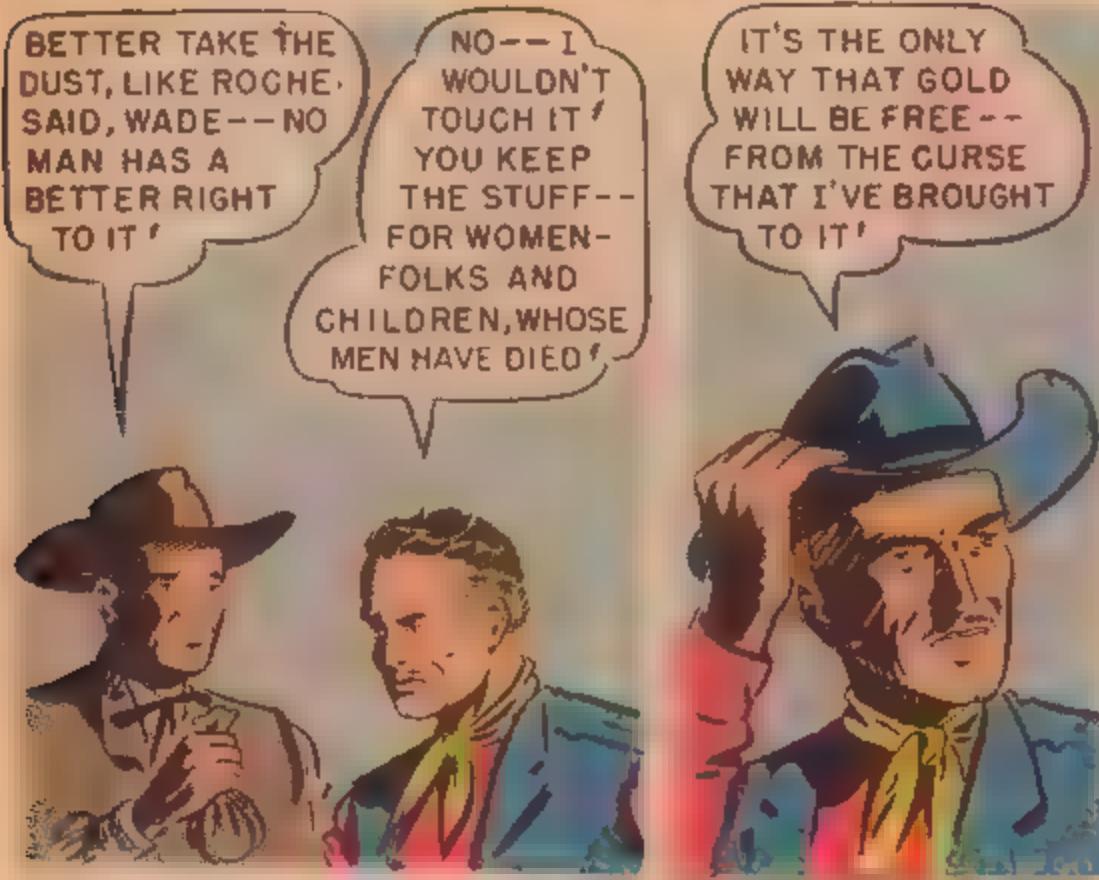
WADE'S FINGERS STRIKE  
THE REAR OF THE COACH,  
AND CLING



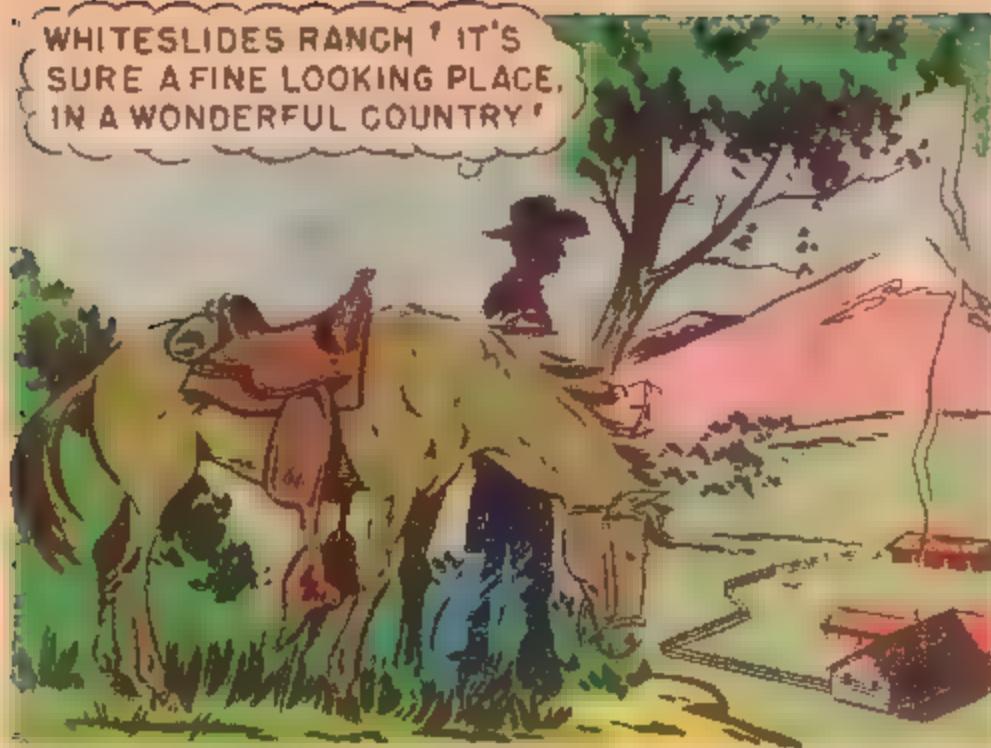
GOT YOU, FRIEND--  
GIVE ME THE REINS!

WOHA-A! EASY--- EASY!  
WOHA--A--A!





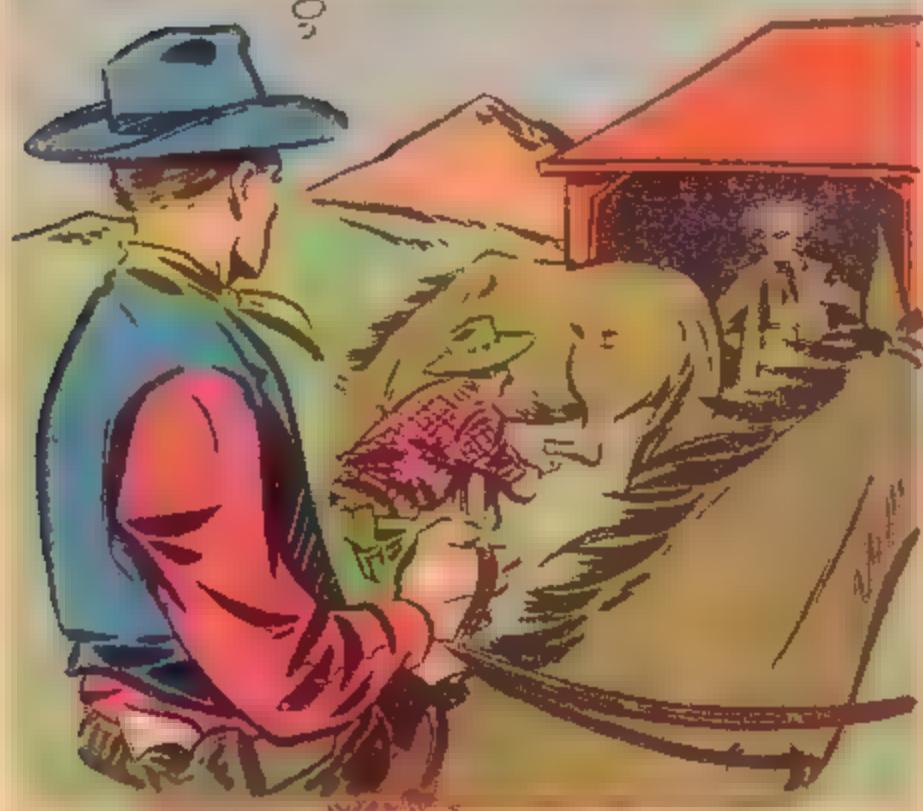
WHITESLIDES RANCH! IT'S  
SURE A FINE LOOKING PLACE,  
IN A WONDERFUL COUNTRY!



THEY SAY NO MAN COULD ASK FOR A  
BETTER BOSS THAN BILL BELLOUNDS--  
BUT HIS SON IS A SCAPEGRACE -- HE'S  
GOT A GROWNUP DAUGHTER, TOO!

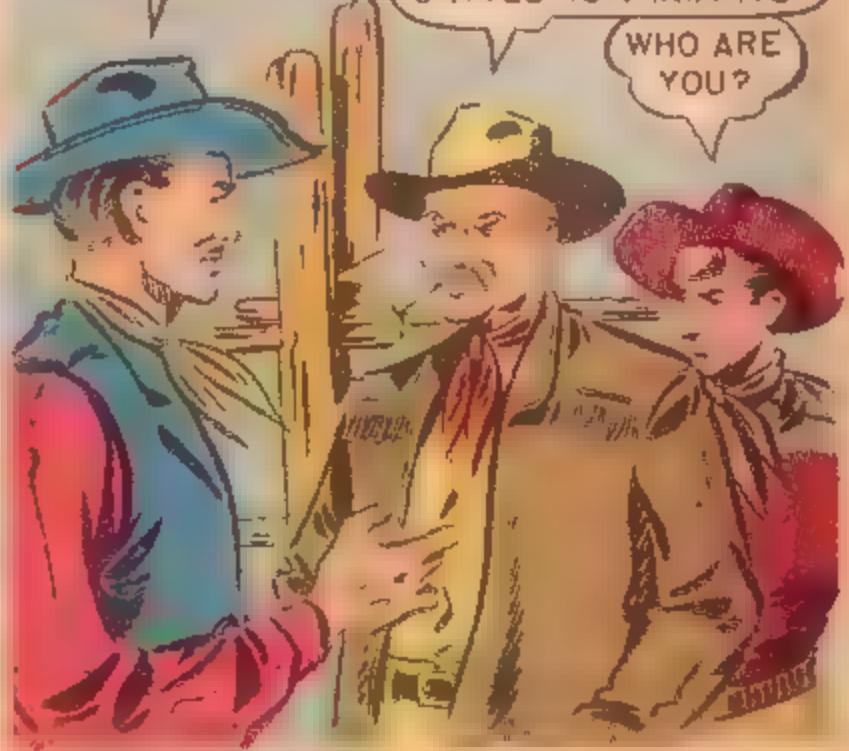


THAT MUST BE HIM -- WATCHING  
THE HORSESHOEING!



BELLOUNDS? I HEAR  
YOU'RE LOOKING FOR  
A HUNTER!

UH-HUH! A  
GOOD MAN WITH  
DOGS AND GUNS --  
WE'RE LOSING  
CATTLE TO VARMINTS!  
WHO ARE  
YOU?

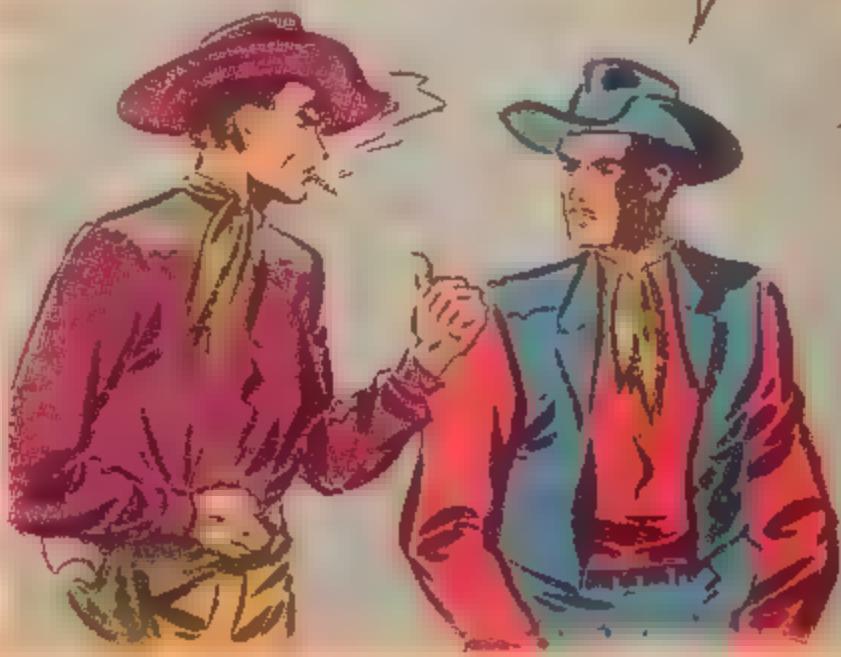


MY HANDLE IS BENT  
WADE! I'VE USED DOGS  
AND KILLED CATAOUNDS--  
YOU'RE JACK BELLOUNDS,  
I TAKE IT?

YES! I'M  
FOREMAN OF WHITE-  
SLIDES'  
STRIKES ME  
YOU'RE KIND OF  
OLD FOR HUNTING--  
AND BESIDES, I'VE  
HEARD OF YOU!

YOU'VE GOT A NAME  
THROUGH COLORADO OF  
BRINGING HARD LUCK! WE  
DON'T WANT YOUR SORT  
AT THIS RANCH!

I SEE---  
DON'T  
BLAME YOU,  
BELLOUNDS--



JUST A MINUTE, SON! YOU'RE FOREMAN, BUT I'M STILL OWNER OF WHITESLIDES--AND I'M HIRING BENT WADE---I'M NOT SUPERSTITIOUS, AND I LIKE HIS STYLE!

--BUT IF THE OLD GUSS BRINGS YOU HARD LUCK, DON'T BLAME ME!

I'M SORRY HE INSULTED YOU, WADE! JACK'S GOT A WILD, VIOLENT STREAK THAT I'M HOPING HE'LL OUTGROW--MAYBE AFTER HE'S MARRIED--

ALL RIGHT-- SUIT YOURSELF--

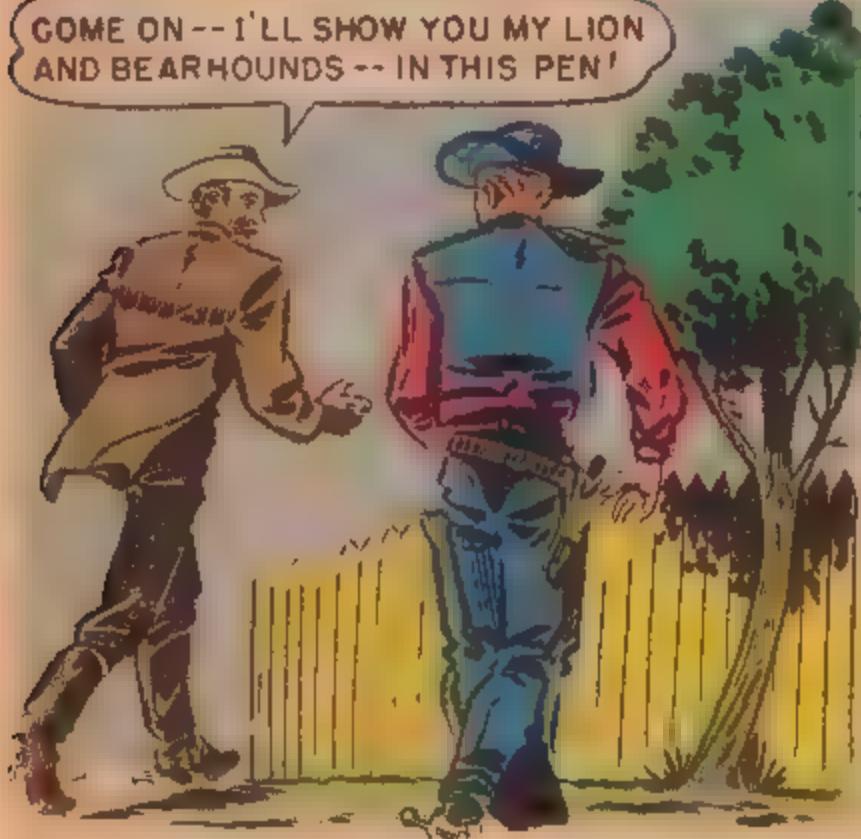
I UNDERSTAND, BELLOUNDS--THERE'S AN OLD SAYING--"INSULTS ARE AIMED LOW--THEY DON'T HIT YOU UNLESS YOU'RE DOWN THERE ALREADY"



COME ON--I'LL SHOW YOU MY LION AND BEARHOUNDS -- IN THIS PEN!

GOOD DOGS! I LIKE THEIR LOOKS!

AND THEY SURE LIKE YOURS, WADE! THEY'RE ONLY HALF-TRAINED-- AS YET!

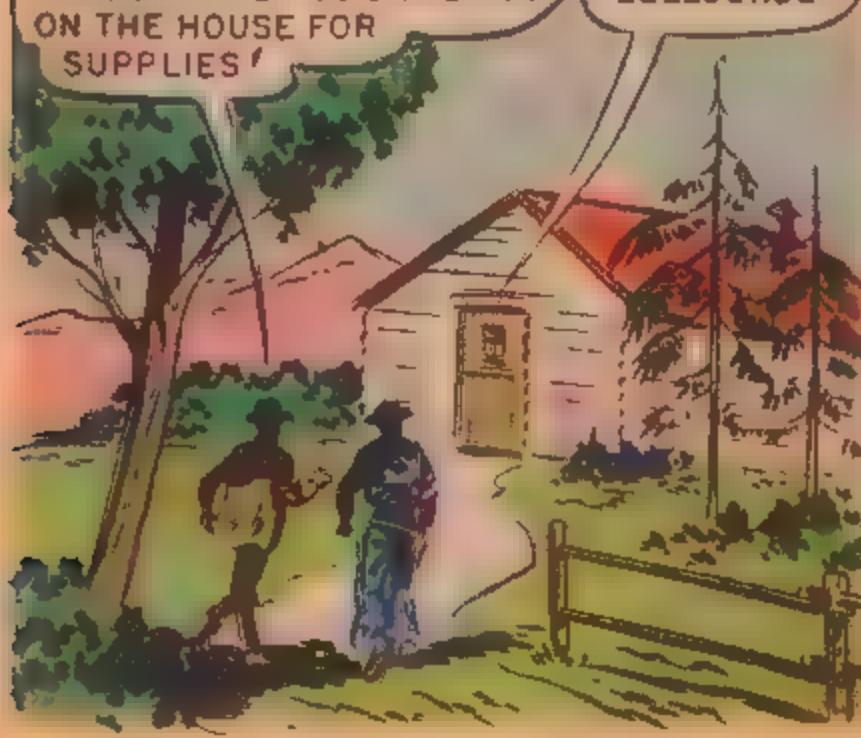


THIS'LL BE YOUR CABIN-- SEPARATE FROM THE OTHER HANDS-- AND YOU CAN DRAW ON THE HOUSE FOR SUPPLIES'

THAT'S FINE, BELLOUNDS!

MY DAUGHTER, COLUMBINE, WILL BRING YOU EXTRA BLANKETS AND THINGS-- THERE'S NOTHING FANCY HERE!

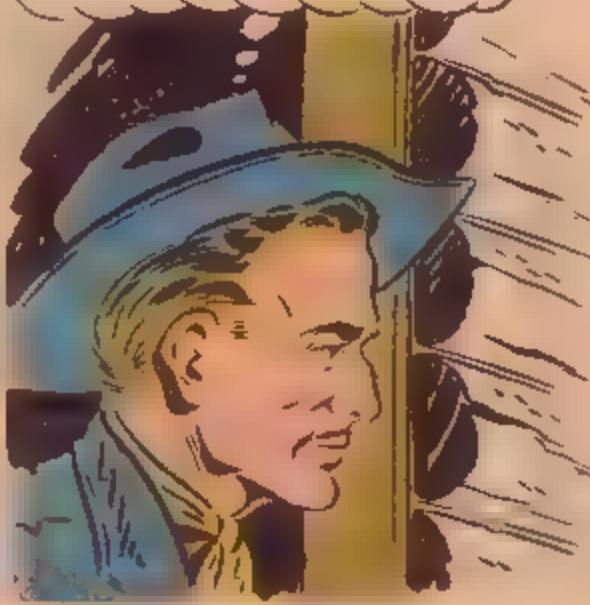
IT'S BETTER THAN I DESERVE, BELLOUNDS-- BUT I HEAR THAT'S THE WAY YOU TREAT EVERYBODY!



I'LL SEND COLUMBINE RIGHT  
OVER WITH THE THINGS  
YOU'LL NEED' AND REMEMBER,  
WADE --- YOU TAKE ORDERS  
FROM ME, NOT FROM MY SON--  
BUT IF JACK TROMPS ON  
YOUR TOES, TRY TO BE  
PATIENT!



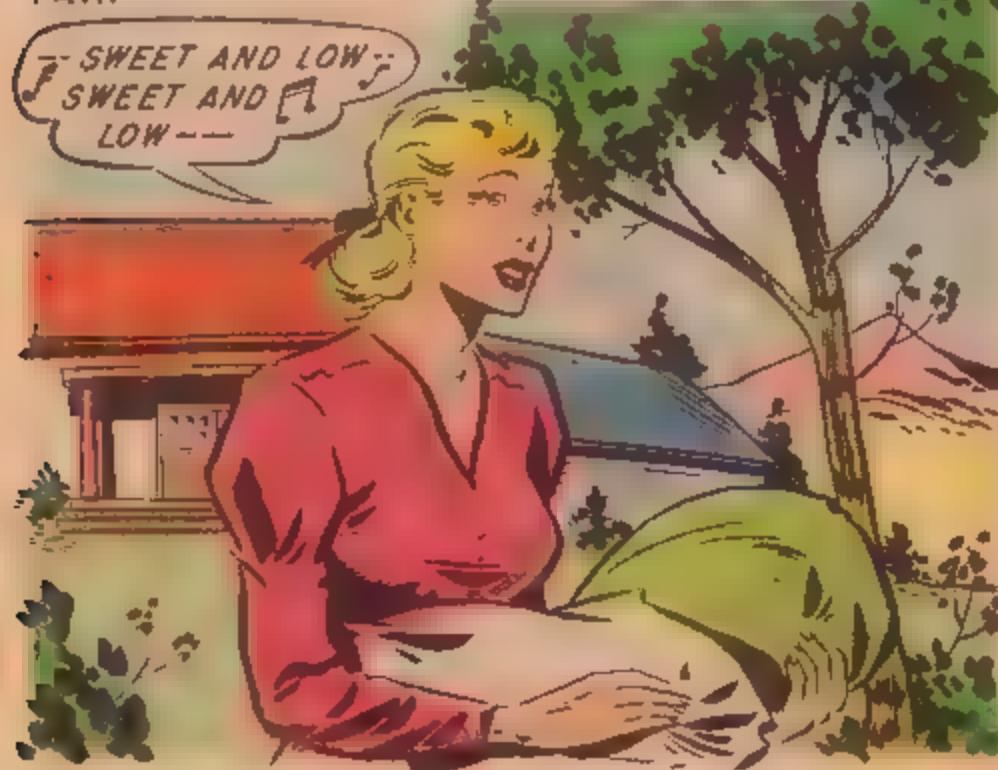
I RECKON OLD BILL BELLOUNDS  
IS AS FINE AS THEY MAKE 'EM--  
EVEN IF HIS SON IS A MEAN  
PUP-- I COULD STICK AT A JOB  
LIKE THIS--IF IT ISN'T TOO  
CLOSE TO THE OLD TRAIL!



A SOUND FROM THE RANCH  
HOUSE ROUSES WADE FROM  
HIS THOUGHTS



A GIRL IN HER TEENS COMES SINGING DOWN THE  
PATH



LUCY-- HER VOICE-- HER  
FACE! I--I'M SEEING  
VISIONS!

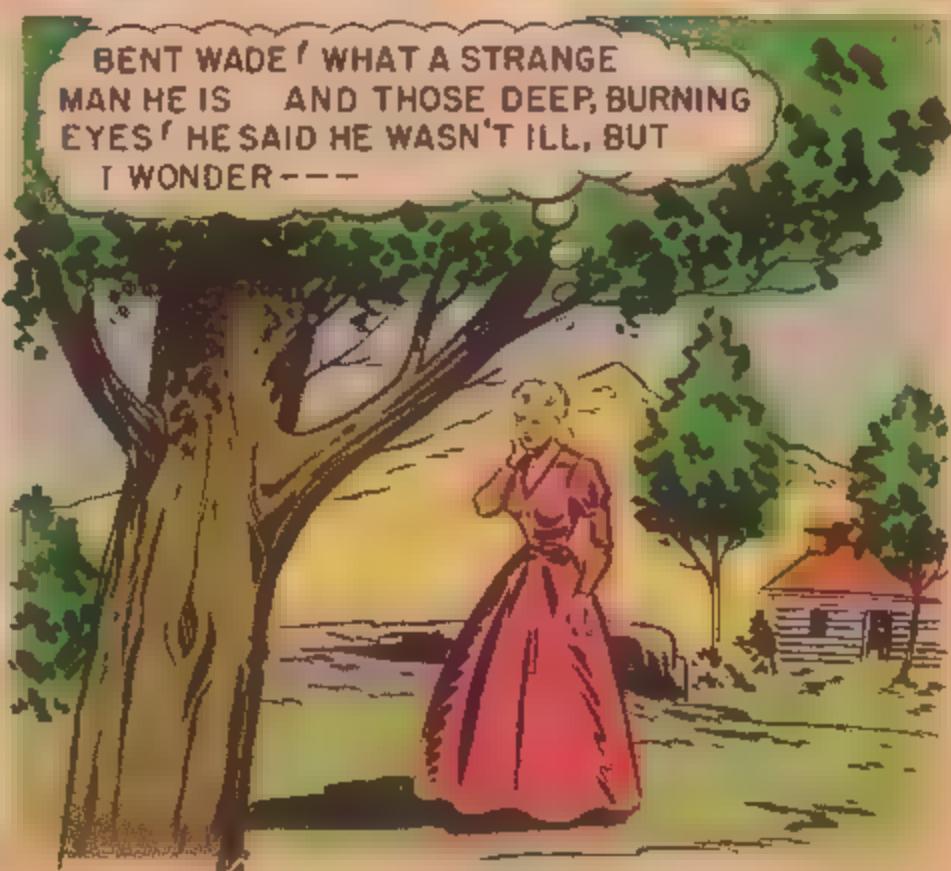
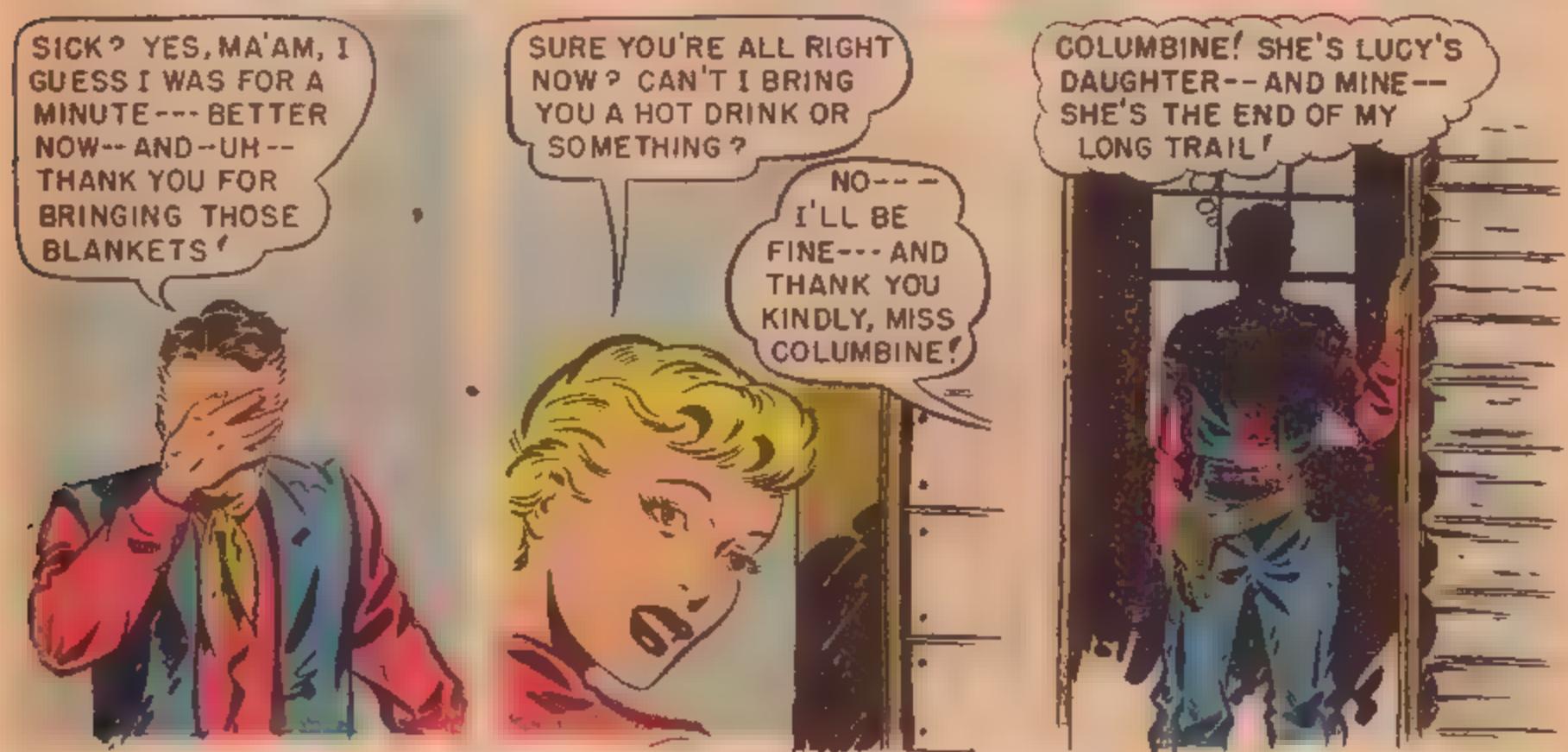


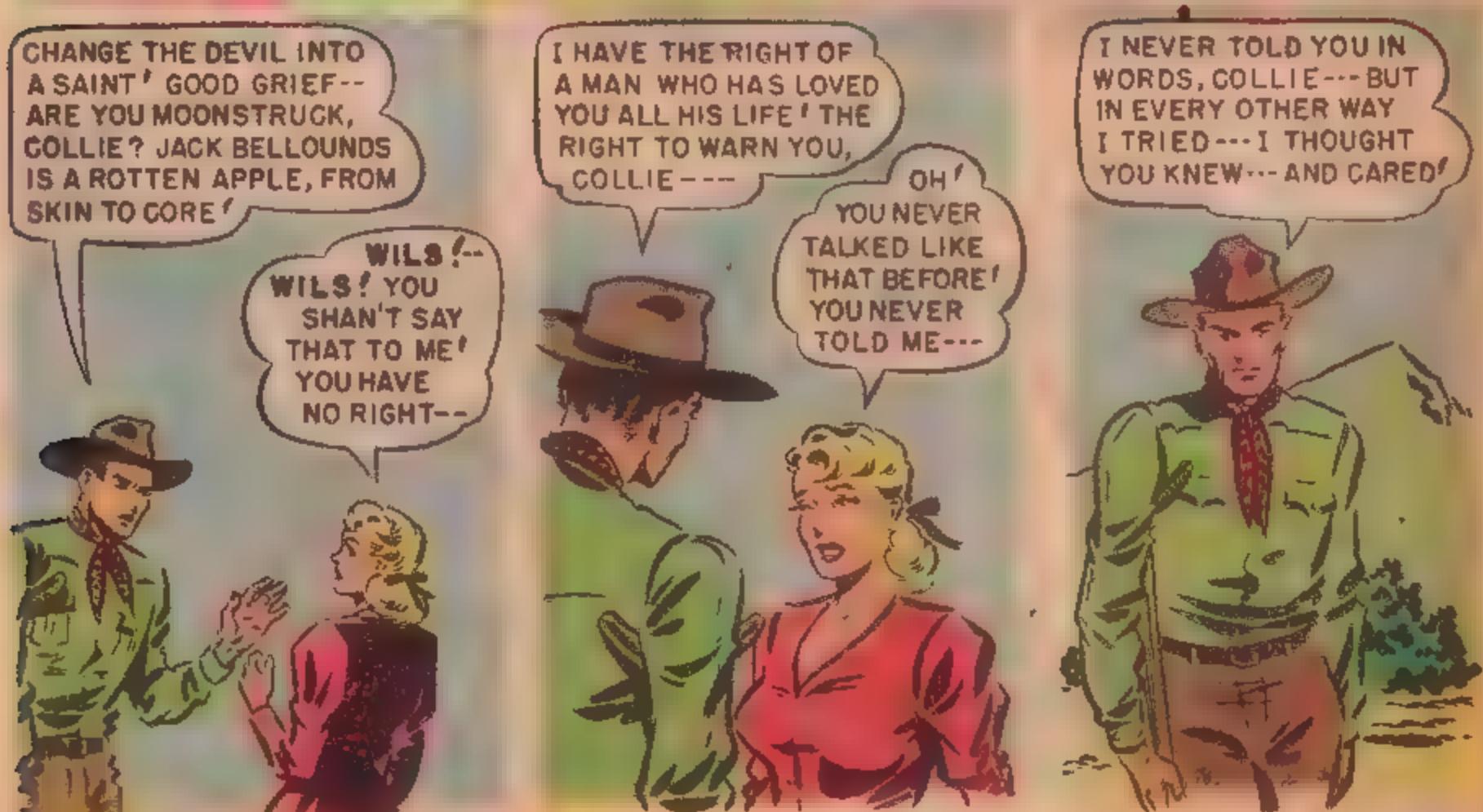
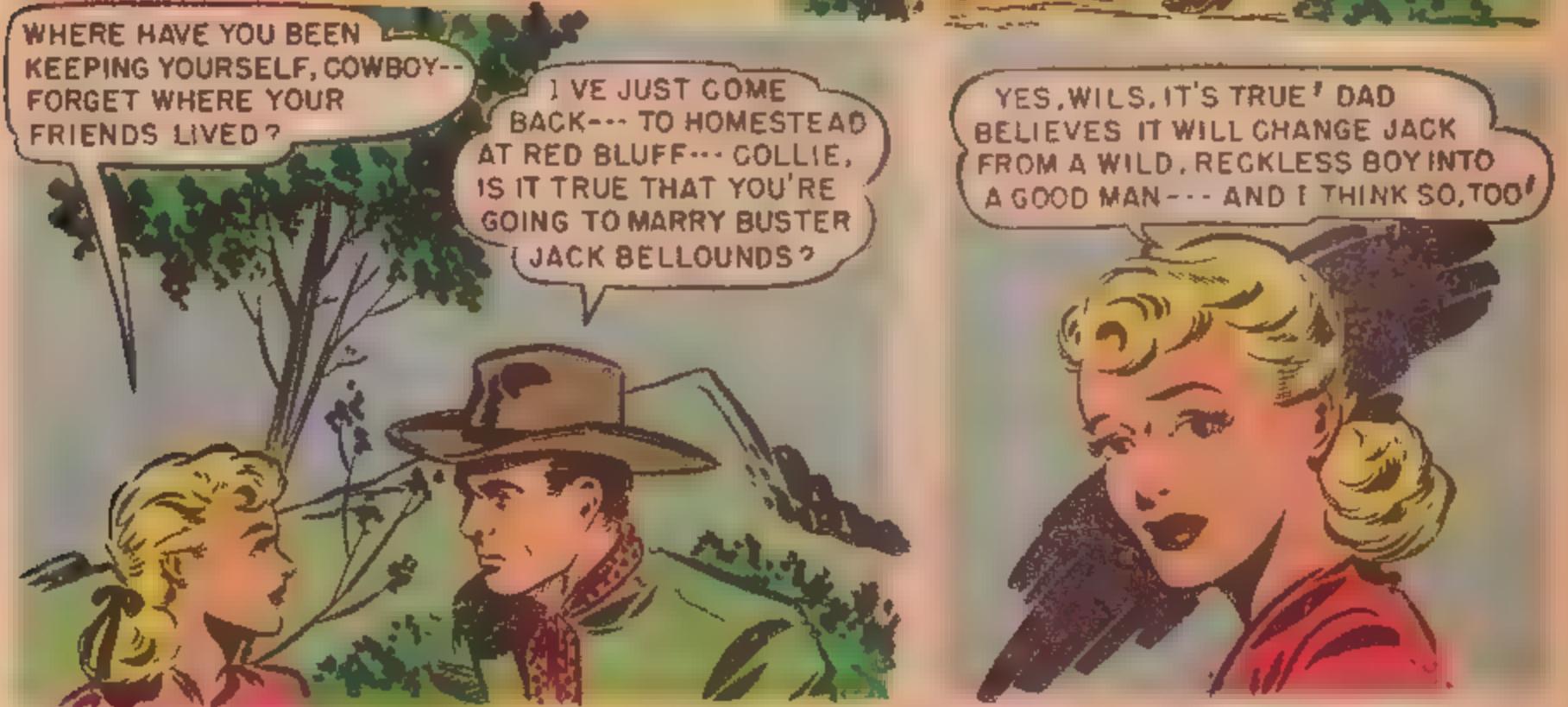
SWEET  
AND LOW--  
SWEET  
AND LOW--

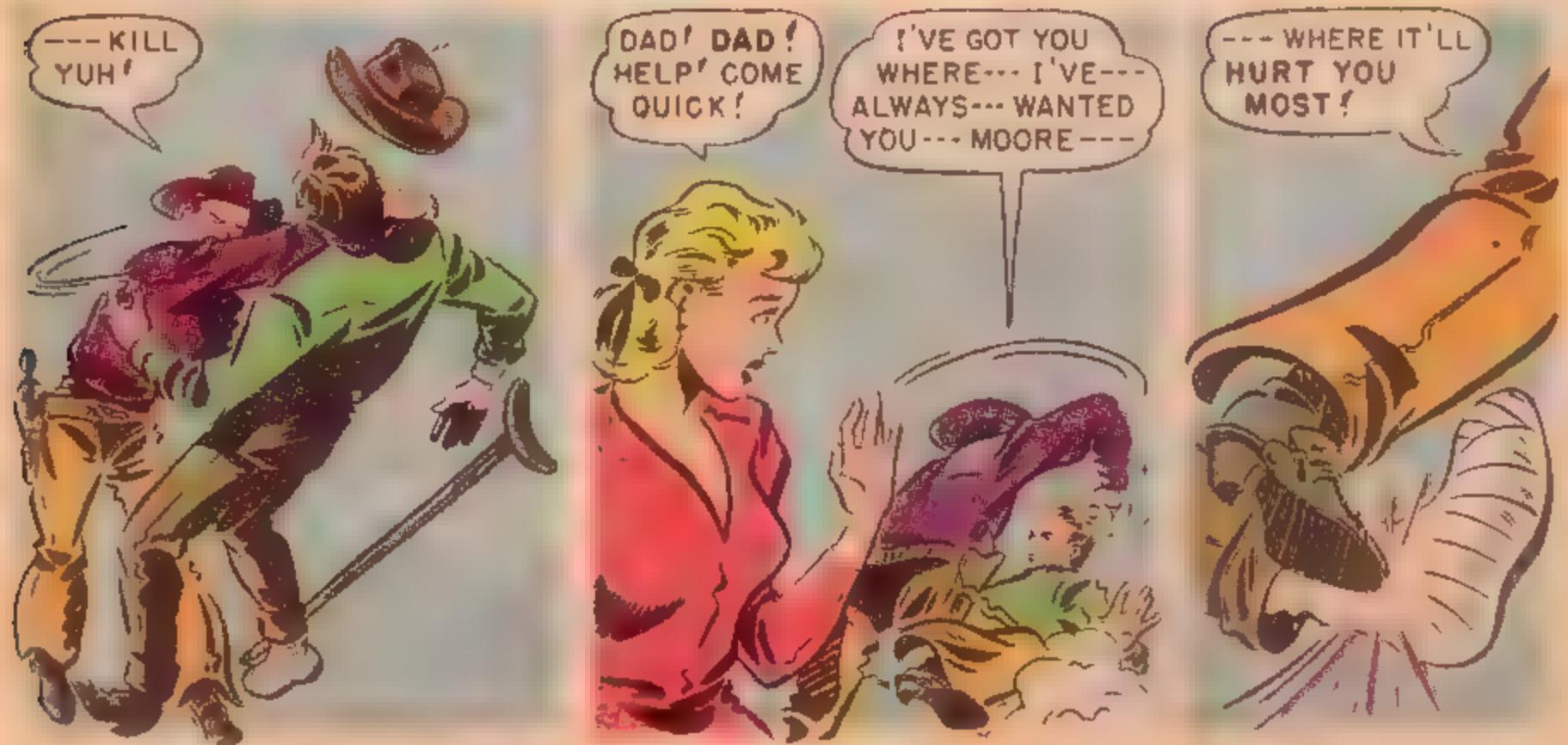
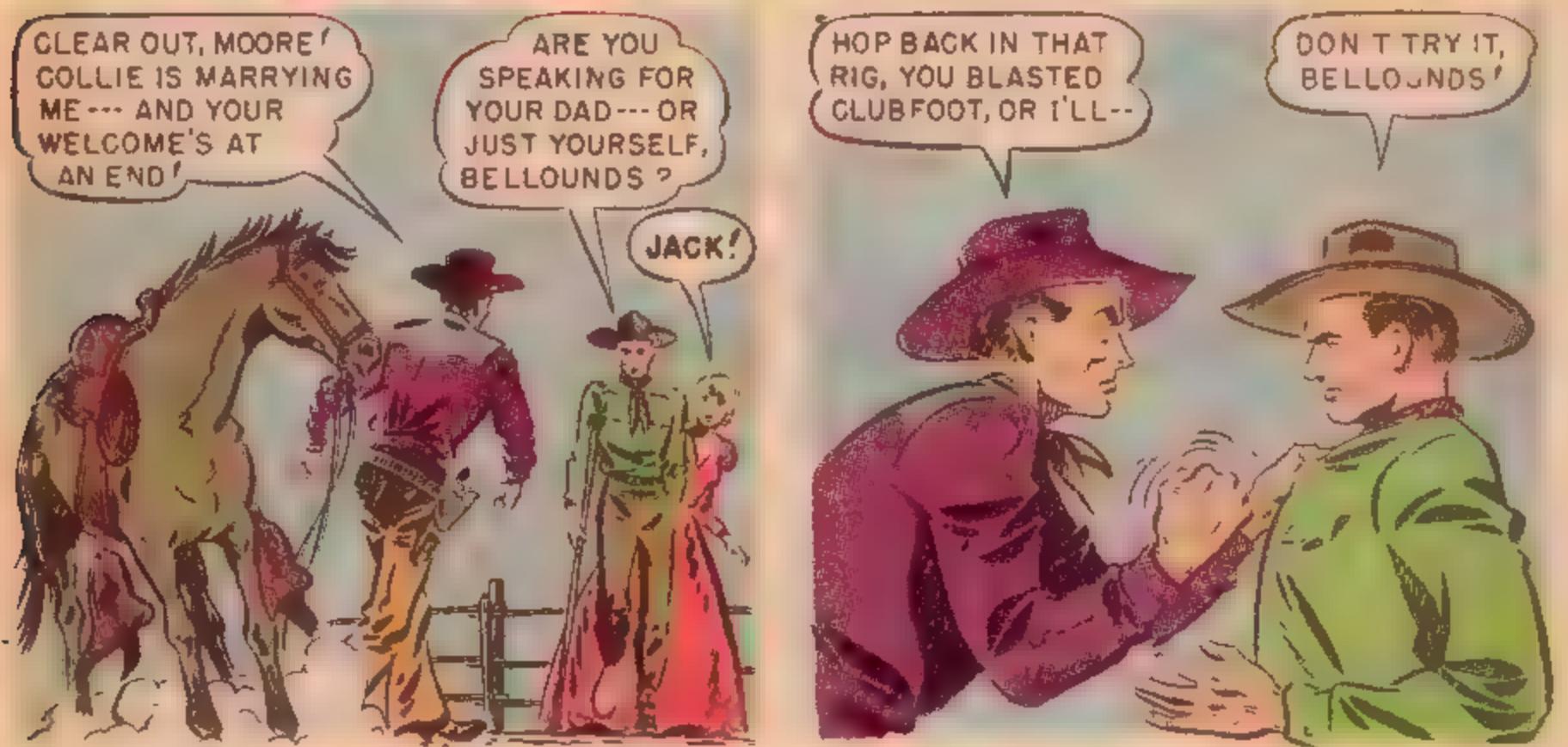
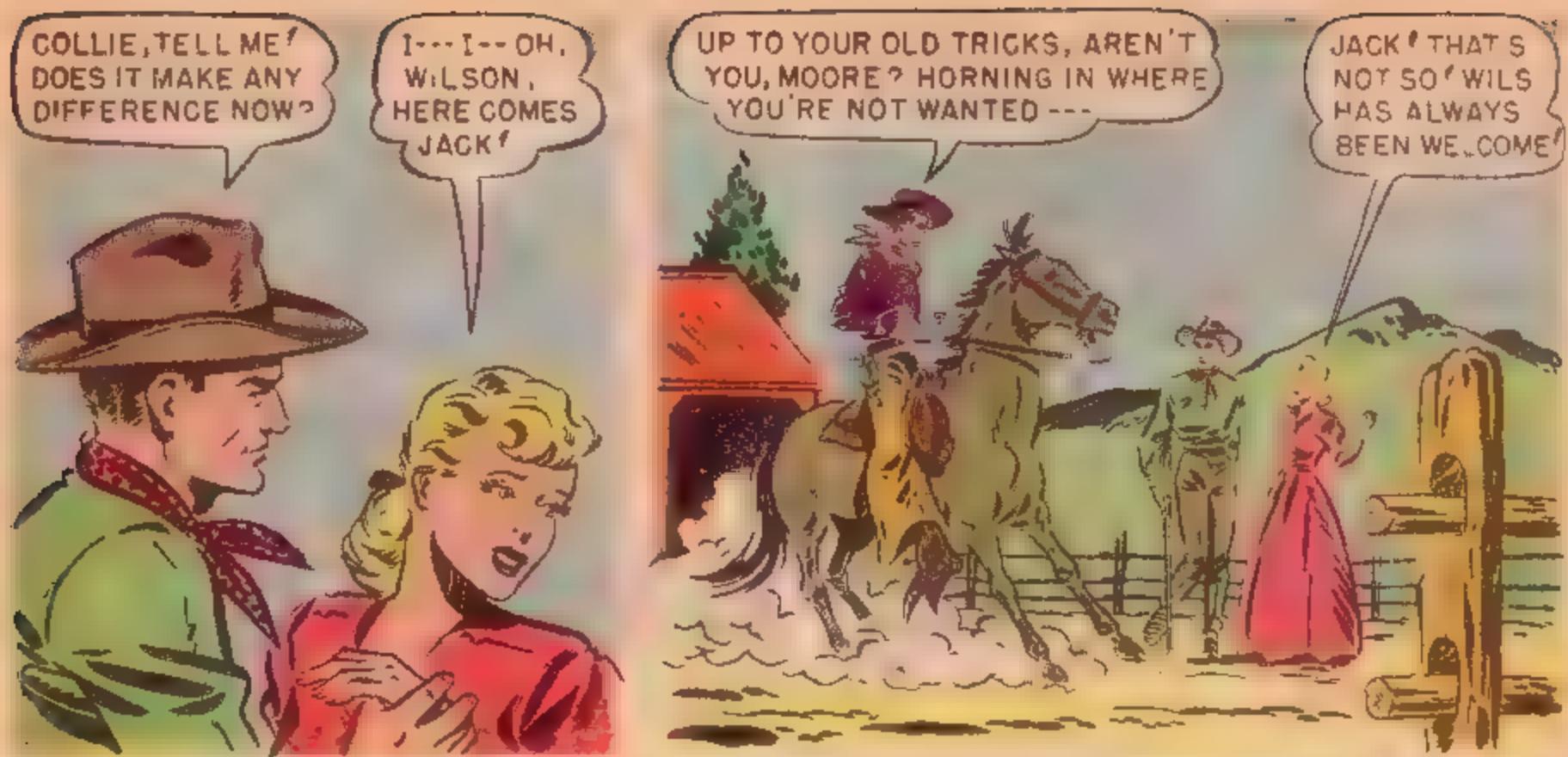
HER VOICE -- SHE'S  
COMING NEARER!  
IT--IT CAN'T BE--  
LUCY!

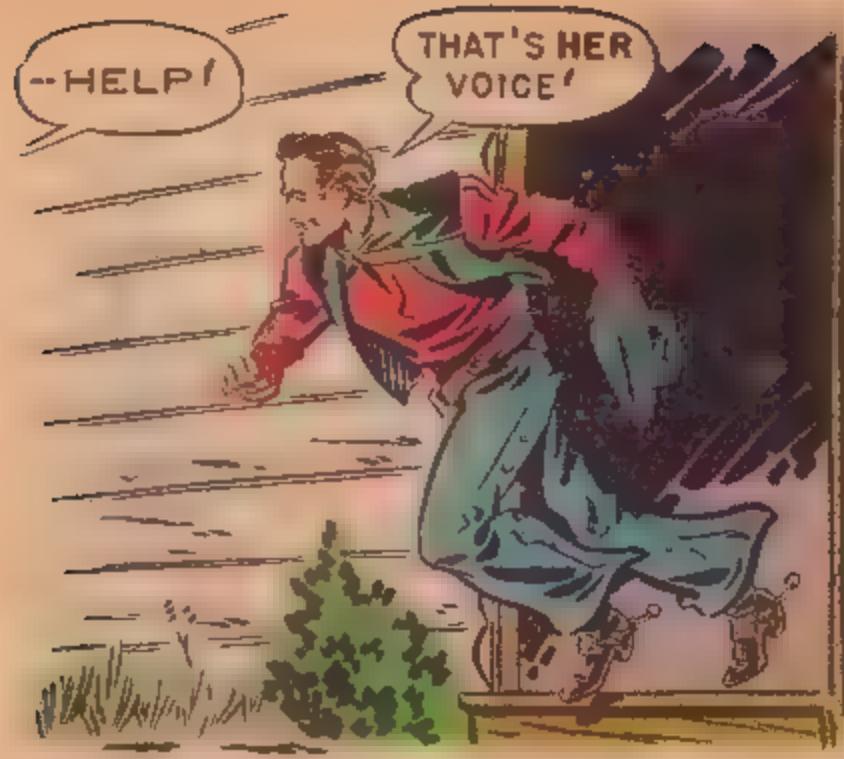
BENT WADE'  
WHERE--? OH,  
THERE YOU ARE!

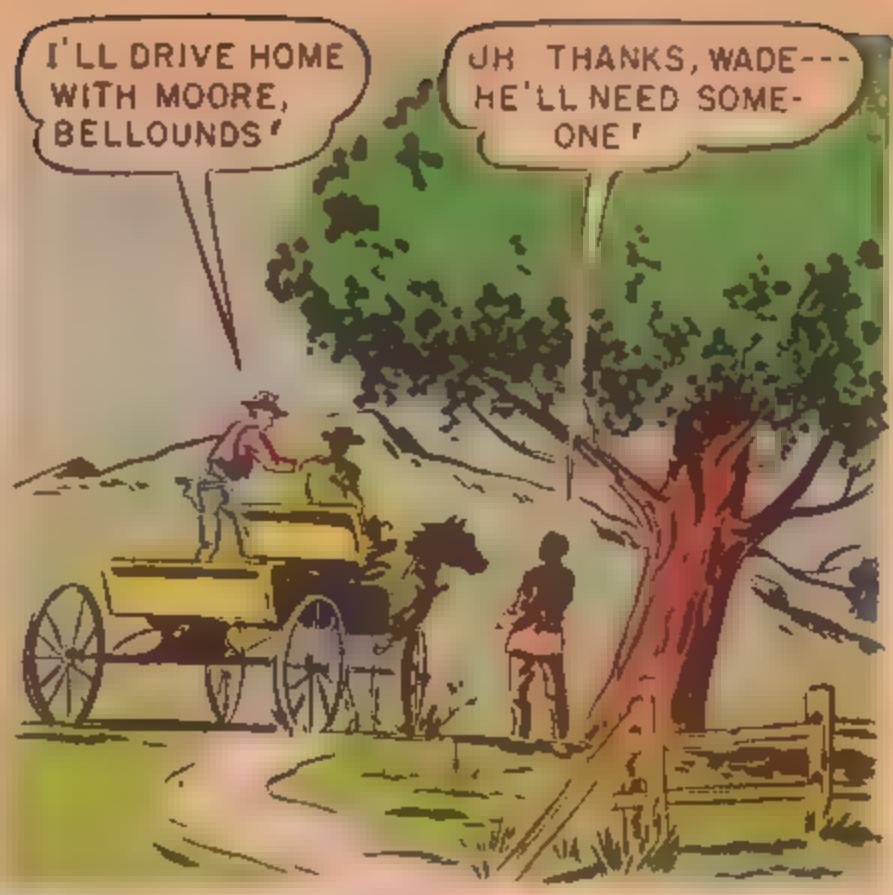
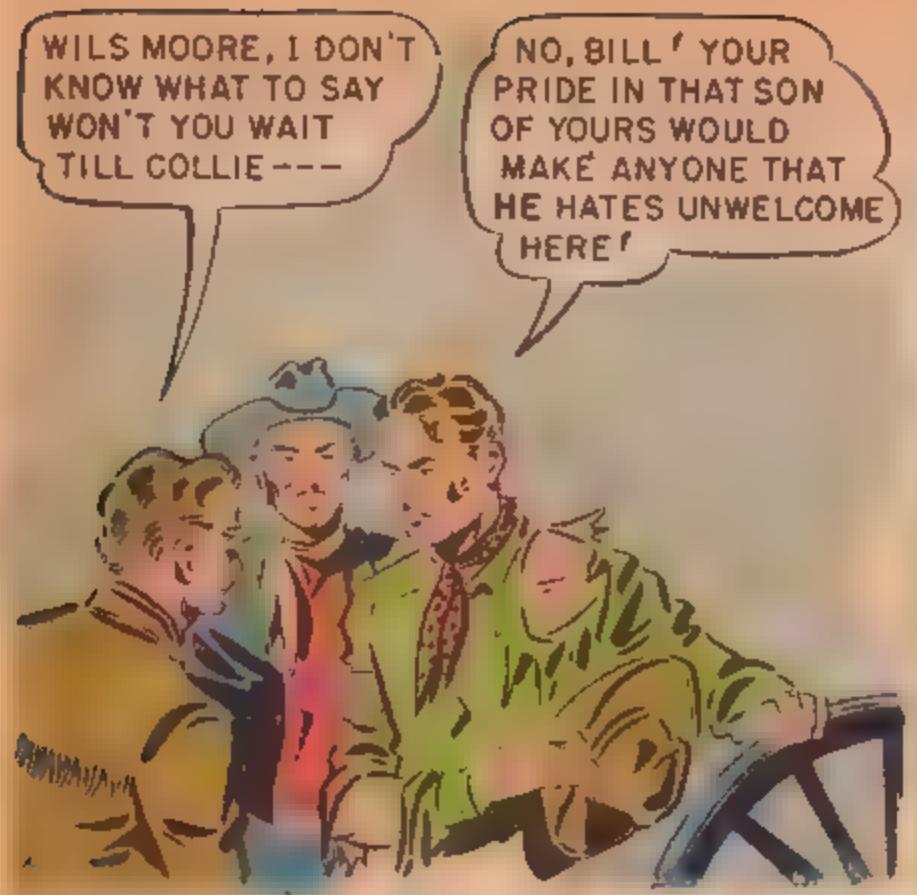




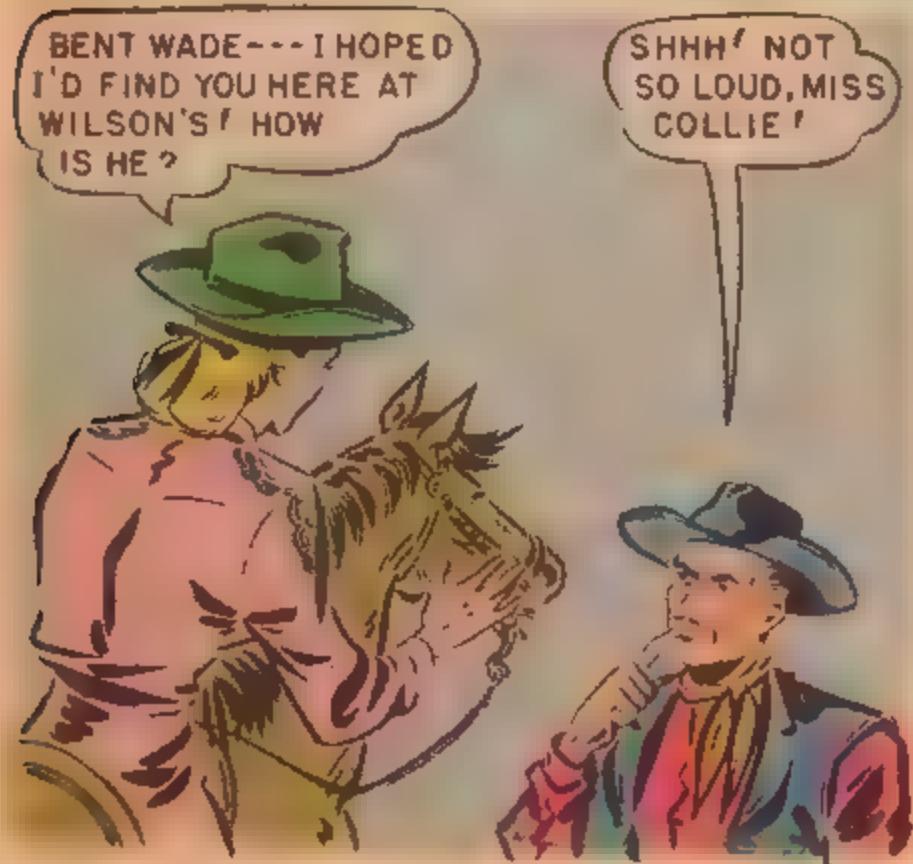


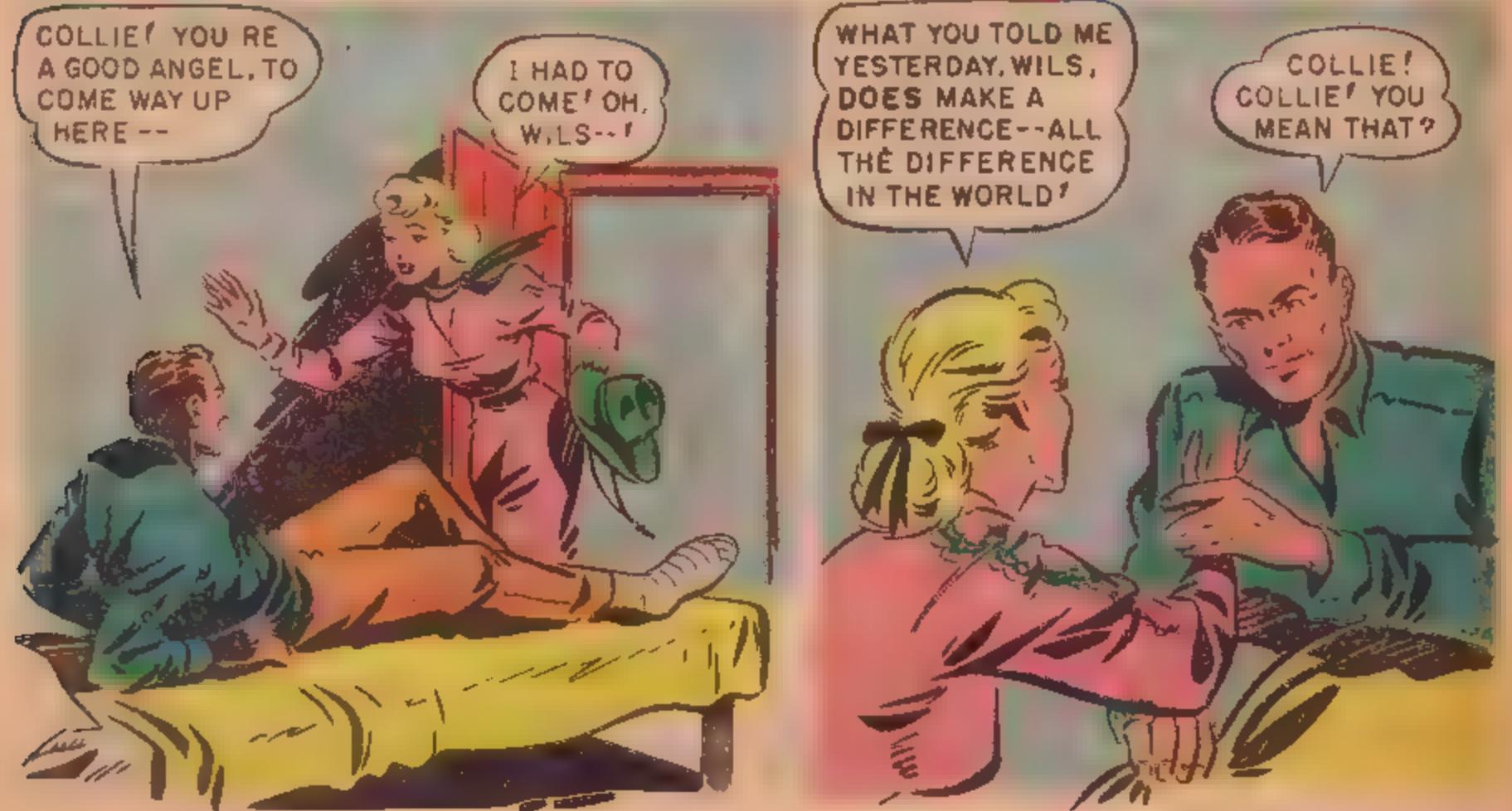
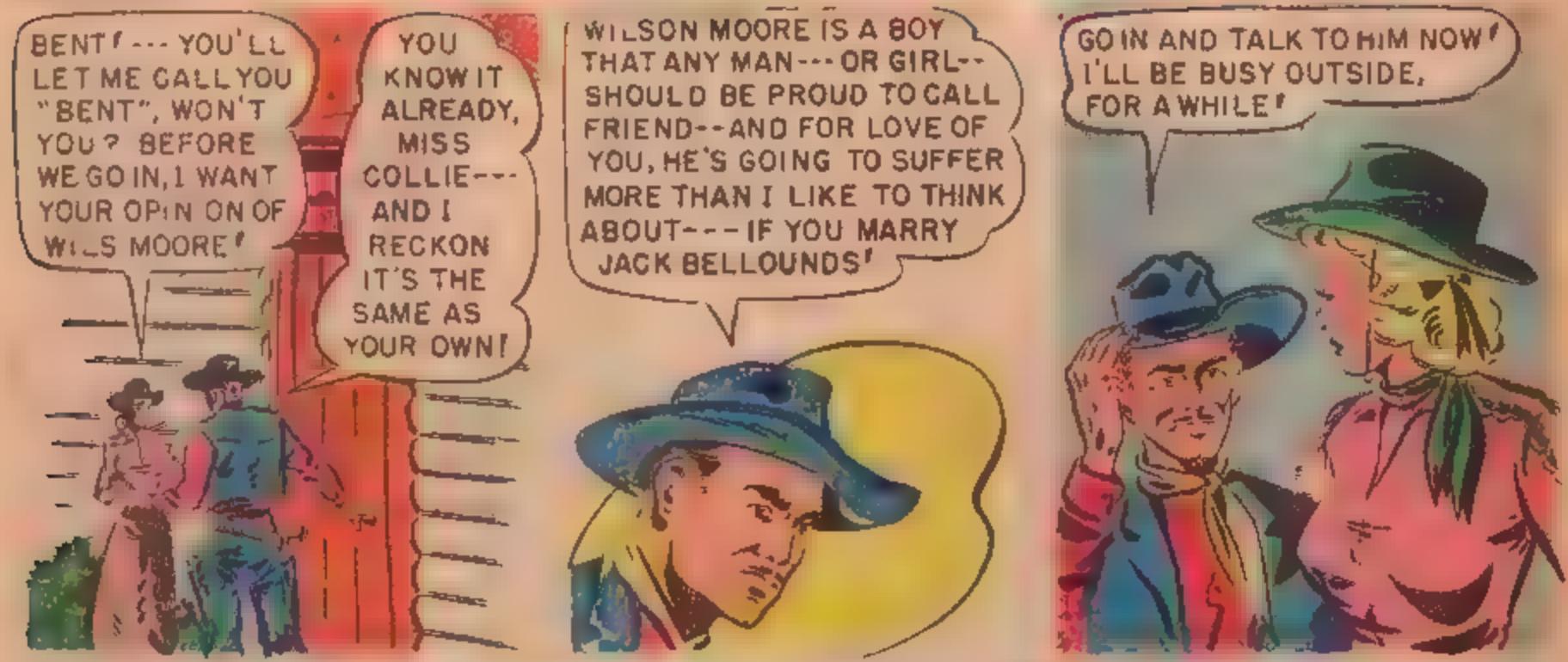
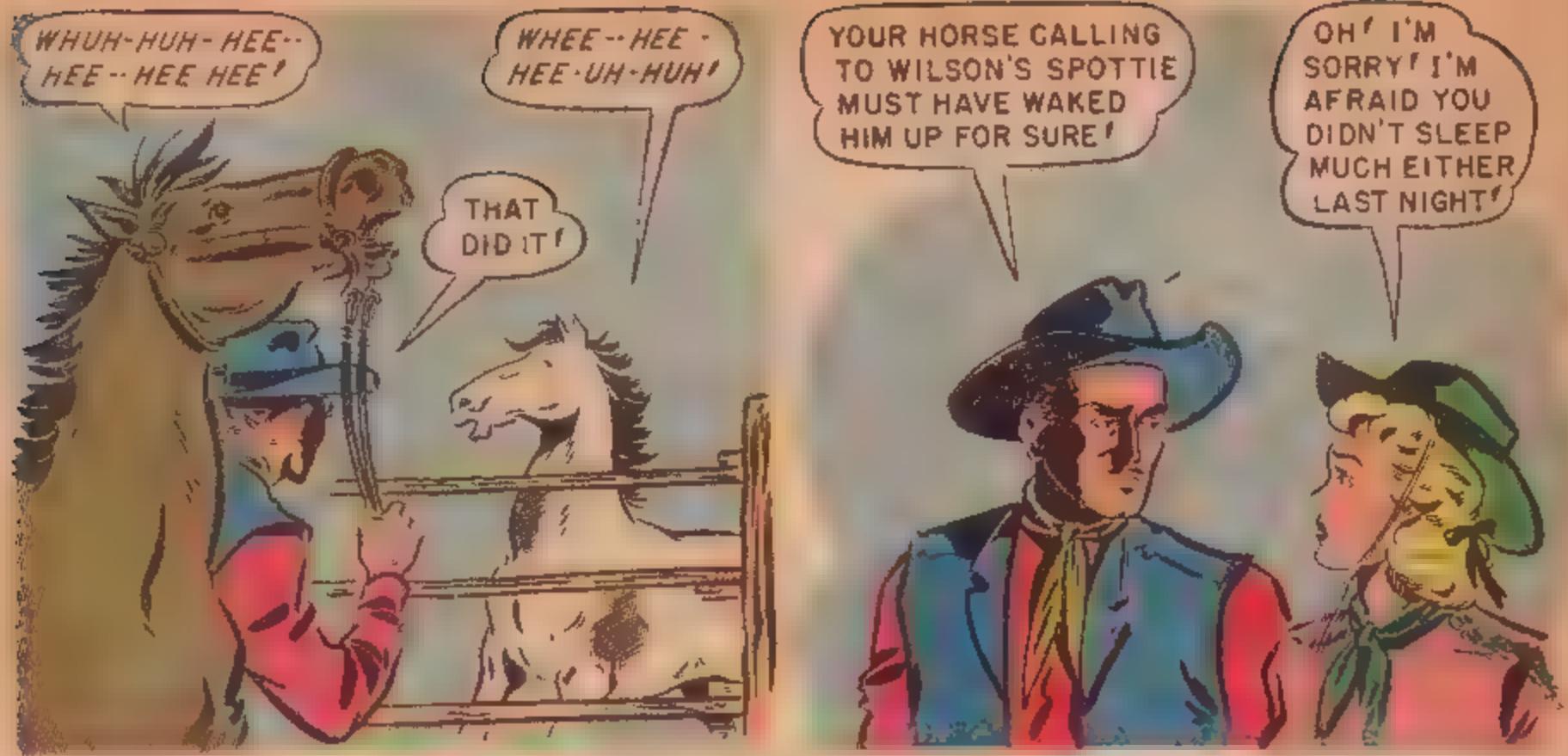






EARLY THE NEXT MORNING ..





I MEAN IT! AND I HAD TO TELL YOU, WILS -- BUT I'M GOING TO MARRY JACK BELLOUNDS, ALL THE SAME! IF I DIDN'T, IT WOULD BREAK DAD'S HEART--- AND I OWE DAD ALL THAT I HAVE AND AM!



BUT--- I DON'T UNDERSTAND! YOU LOVE ME, YOU SAID---

THAT'S JUST AS TERRIBLY TRUE, MY DEAR!



GOOD-BYE, WILS! I MAY--SEE YOU AGAIN-- BUT NOT AFTER OCTOBER FIRST--- I'M MARRYING JACK THEN!



BENT! YOU HEARD--- WHAT I JUST TOLD WILS?

YES, COLLIE--- BUT I RECKON WHAT YOU TOLD HIM WILL NEVER COME TO PASS!



CALL IT A HUNCH OR A PREMONITION--- WHEN I GET A FEELING LIKE THIS, IT NEVER FAILS! SOMETHING IS GOING TO PREVENT YOUR MARRYING JACK BELLOUNDS!



SWIFTLY -- TOO SWIFTLY FOR WILSON MOORE THE WEEKS OF SUMMER PASS MOODY AND RESTLESS, HE RIDES MUCH ALONE, DESPITE HIS ACHING FOOT



WADE! WHY---HOW DID YOU FIND ME HERE?

THE "HOW" IS EASY-- YOUR SPOTTIE HAS A QUEER-SHAPED LEFT FRONT HOOF THAT MARKS HIS TRAIL



... AND AS FOR THE "WHY" OF  
MY TRAILING YOU--- I'VE BEEN  
WANTING TO ASK IF YOU EVER  
HEARD HOW COLUMBINE  
CAME TO BE ADOPTED  
BY BELLOUNDS ?

I'VE KNOWN  
THAT SINCE  
WE WERE  
KIDS I THOUGHT  
YOU'D HEARD  
TOO, BENT!

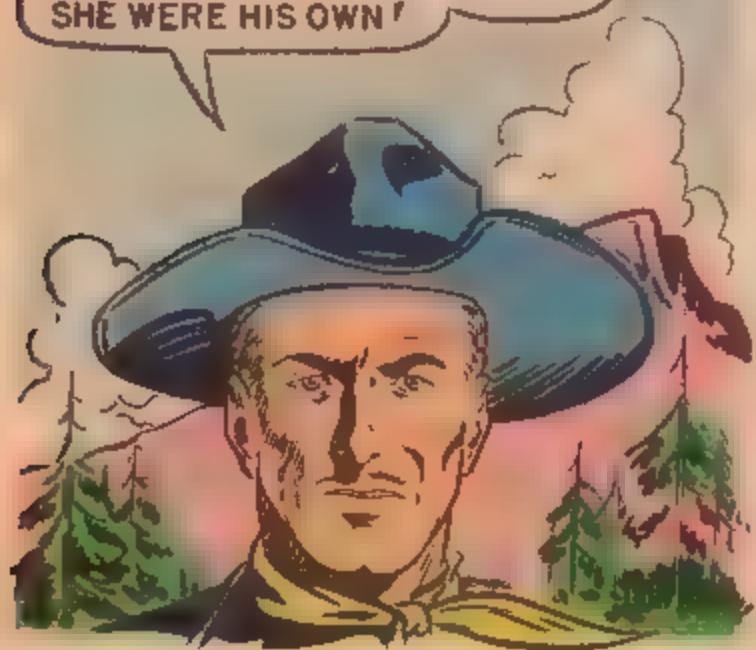
SOME GOLD MINERS FOUND HER IN A  
PATCH OF COLUMBINES, NEAR WHAT WAS  
LEFT OF AN EMIGRANT TRAIN' THE  
INDIANS HAD KILLED HER PEOPLE ---  
THE MINERS BROUGHT HER TO  
BELLOUNDS--- THE ONLY FAMILY  
MAN IN FIFTY MILES !



NOW I UNDERSTAND-- WHY THEY  
CALL HER COLUMBINE-- AND  
WHY SHE FEELS THAT SHE OWES  
MORE TO BELLOUNDS THAN IF  
SHE WERE HIS OWN !

SHE'LL NEVER PAY HIM  
THE WAY HE WANTS---  
THROWING AWAY HER  
LIFE! I'LL SEE TO  
THAT --

NOT WITH GUNPLAY,  
SON ! SOMEHOW I'M  
SURE JACK BELLOUNDS  
WILL PASS OUT OF THE  
PICTURE -- BUT IT WON'T  
BE ON YOUR SOUL !

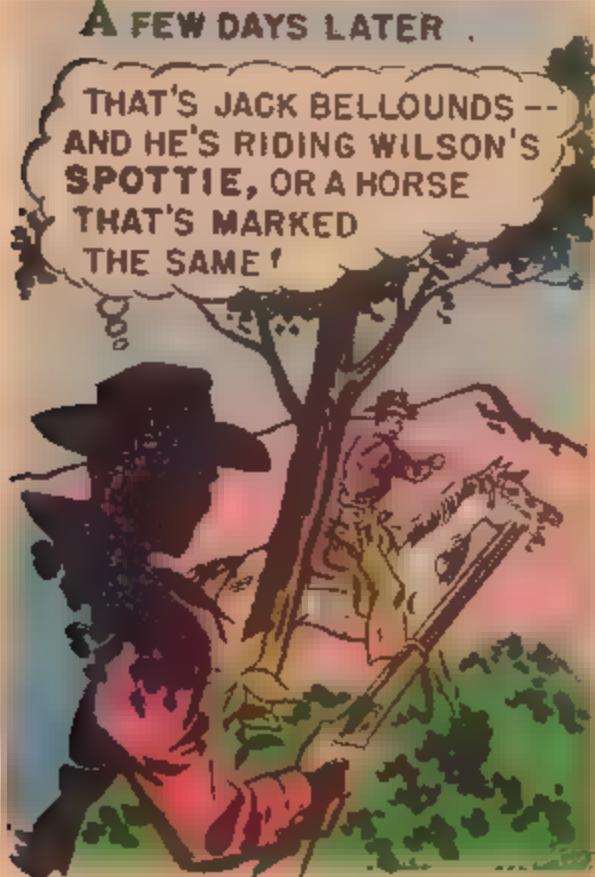


A FEW DAYS LATER .

THAT'S JACK BELLOUNDS --  
AND HE'S RIDING WILSON'S  
SPOTTIE, OR A HORSE  
THAT'S MARKED  
THE SAME !

HE'S GOT OFF, AND IS  
PULLING THE PONY'S  
FRONT SHOE' NOW,  
I WONDER --

QUICKLY, BELLOUNDS SLIPS  
THE HORSESHOE OUT OF  
SIGHT



... AND NAILS ON ANOTHER .



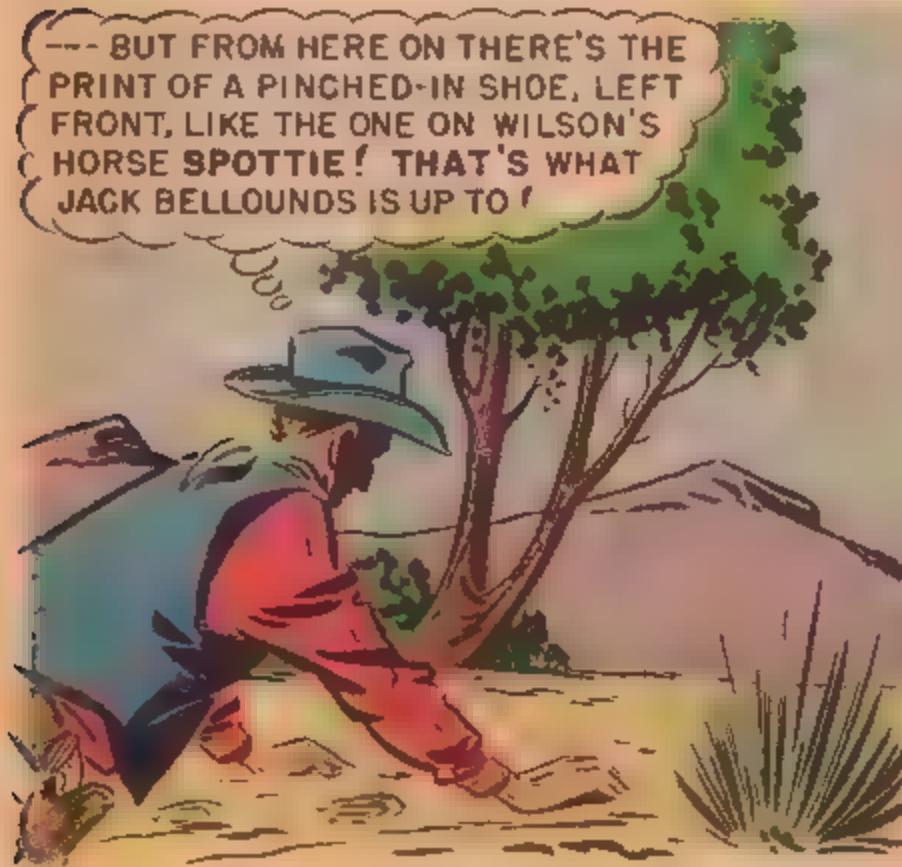
HE'S RIDING ON---  
NOW I'LL LEARN WHAT  
IT'S ALL ABOUT!



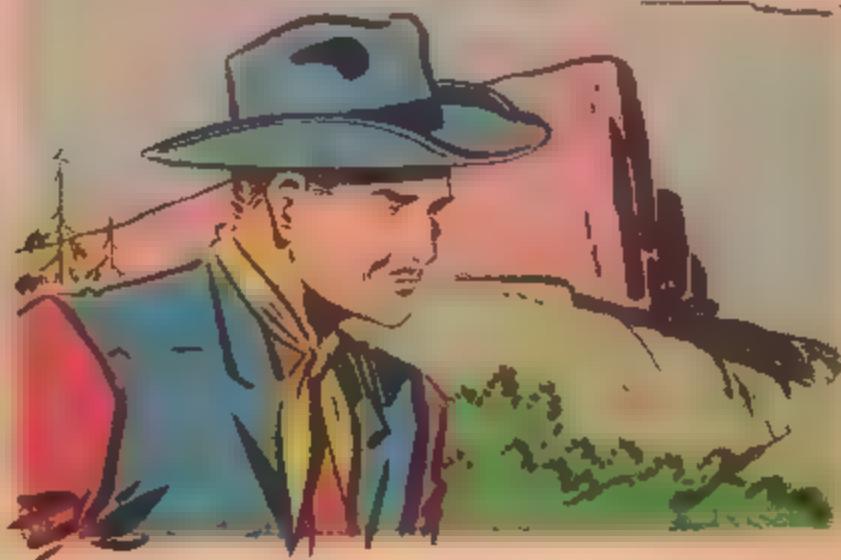
JUST PLAIN ORDINARY  
HORSE TRACKS, WHERE  
I CAN SEE 'EM---



--- BUT FROM HERE ON THERE'S THE  
PRINT OF A PINCHED-IN SHOE, LEFT  
FRONT, LIKE THE ONE ON WILSON'S  
HORSE SPOTTIE! THAT'S WHAT  
JACK BELLOUNDS IS UP TO!



HE AIMS TO LEAVE A TRAIL THAT  
SOMEBODY WILL THINK WAS MADE  
BY WILSON MOORE! IF I FOLLOW  
HIM NOW, I'LL FIND OUT WHY!



THE TRAIL LEADS TO A FAR CORNER OF  
BILL BELLOUNDS' RANGE .



AND A SMALL BUNCH OF GRASS-FAT STEERS...

HI-YAH! GIT  
ALONG, YOU!



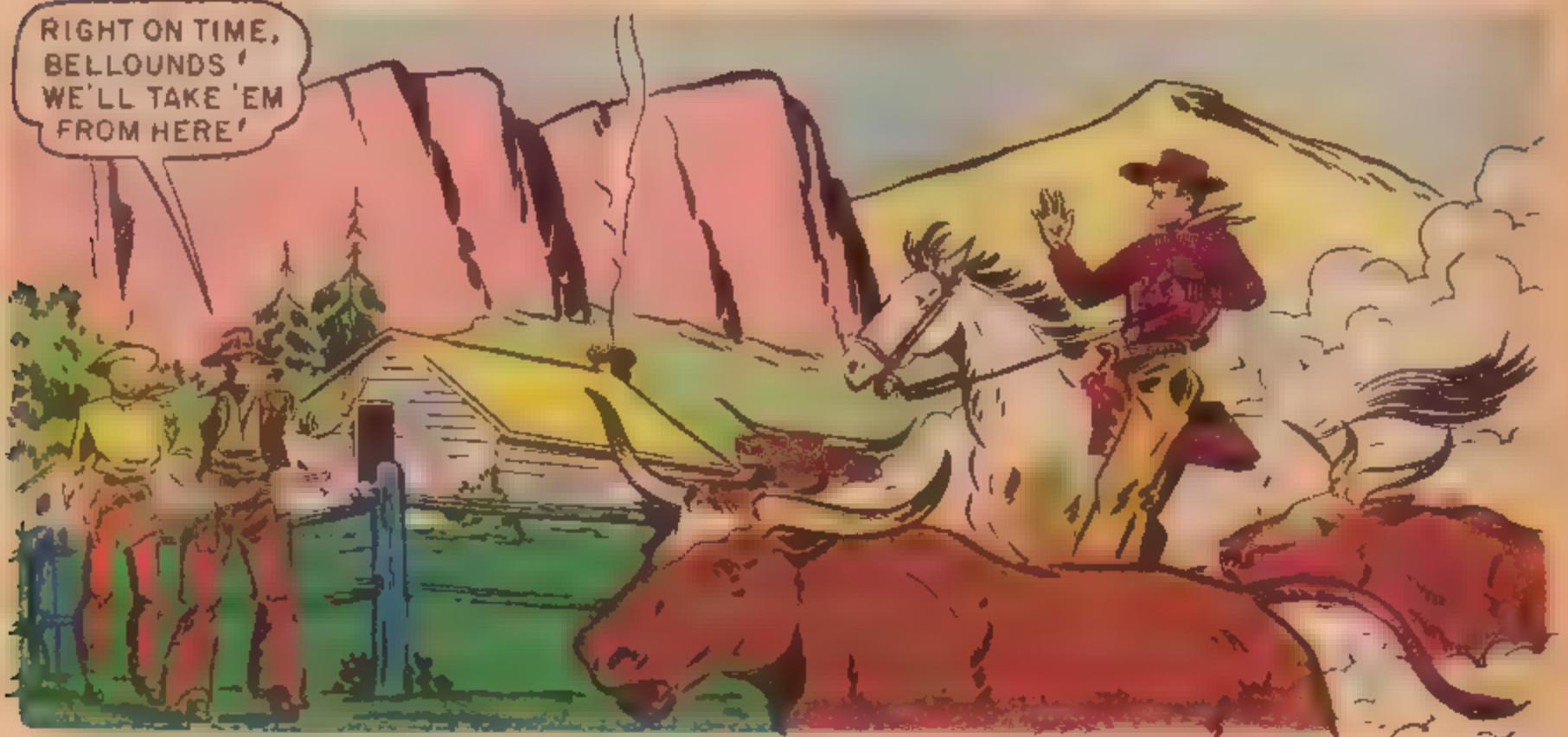
THOSE ARE HIS DAD'S OWN  
STEERS---AND HE'S DRIVING  
THEM OFF' AND PINNING THE  
BLAME ON WILS MOORE!



HE'S HEADED FOR THE OLD RUSTLER  
TRAIL UNDER GORE PEAK---I CAN  
CROSS THE VALLEY AHEAD OF HIM!



RIGHT ON TIME,  
BELLOUNDS!  
WE'LL TAKE 'EM  
FROM HERE!

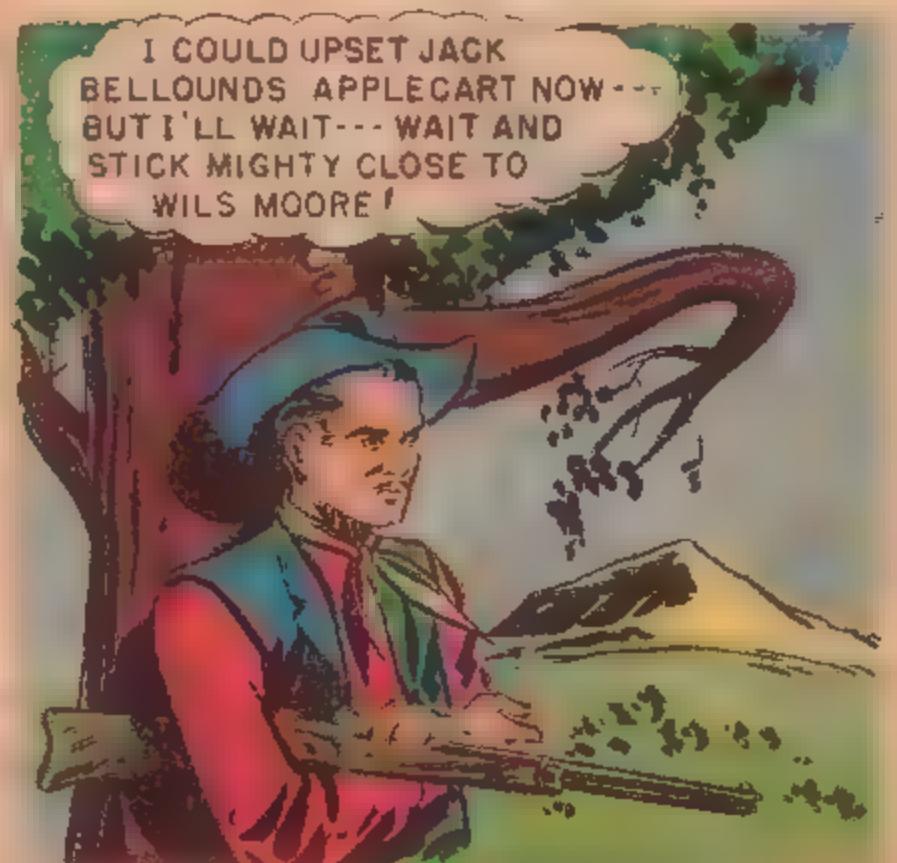
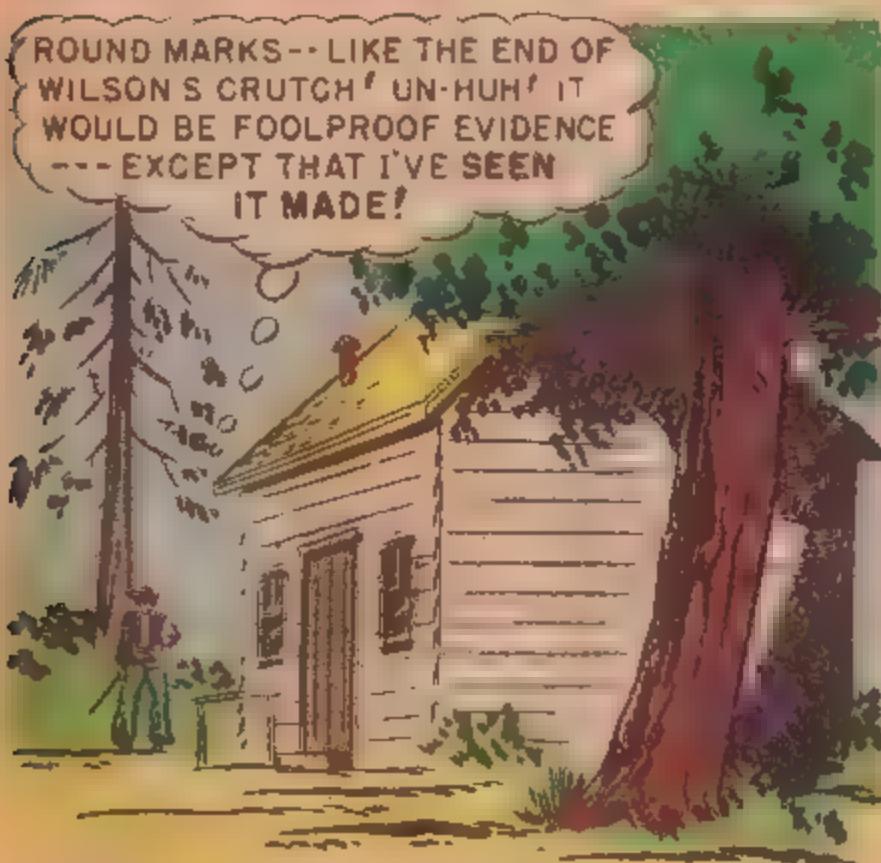
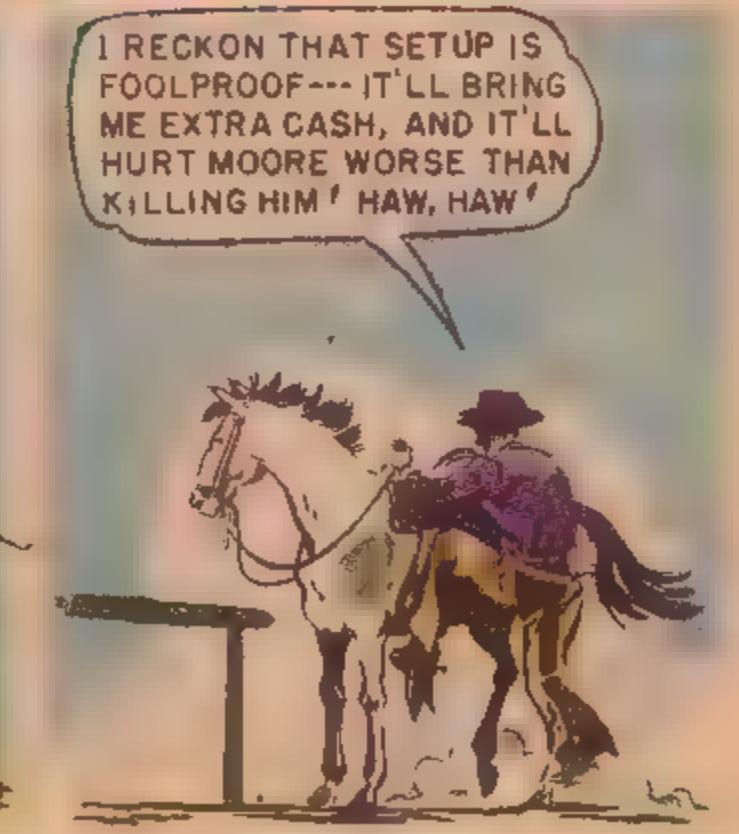
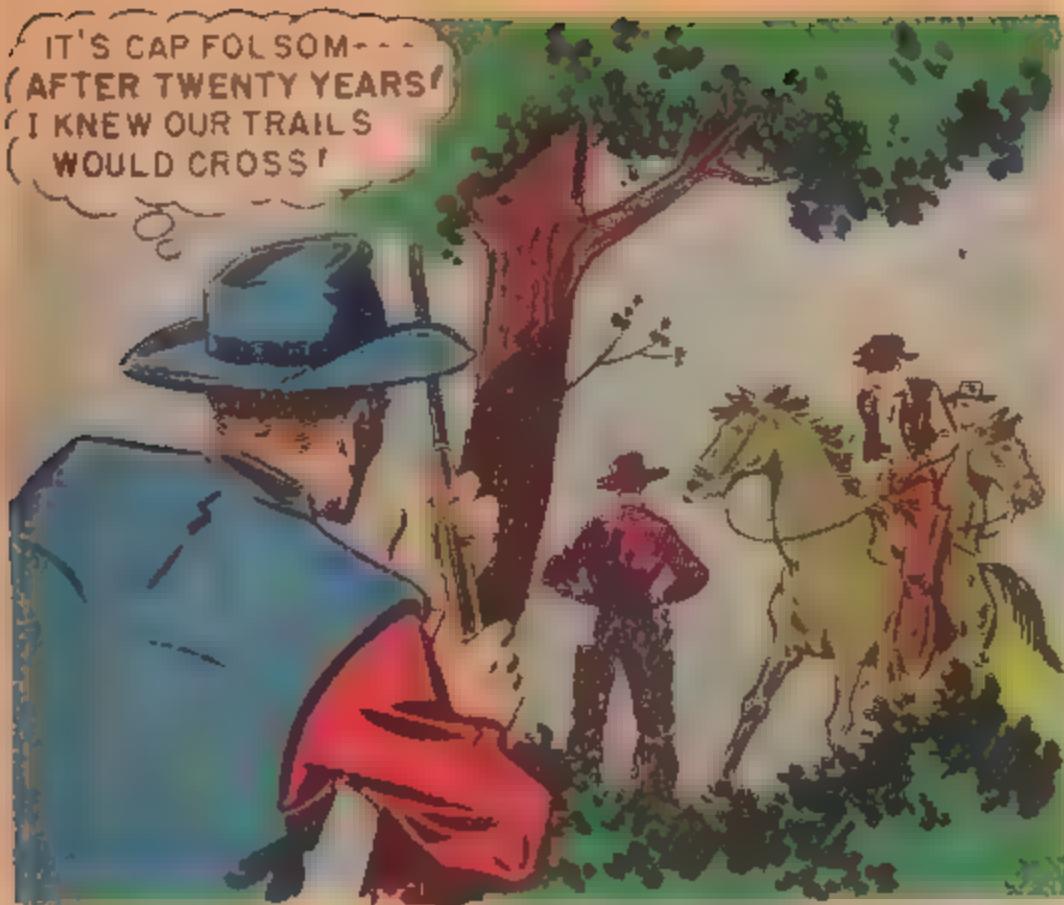


THESE STEERS ARE IN  
PRIME SHAPE! HAVE  
YOU GOT MONEY FOR  
THEM WITH YOU,  
SM TH?

ASK CAP---  
HE HANDLES  
THAT END  
OF IT!

WE PAY AFTER WE'VE GOT RID OF  
THE CRITTERS! IF YOU'RE BACK AT  
THIS OLD PROSPECTOR'S CABIN AT  
NOON A WEEK FROM TODAY, YOU  
CAN COLLECT WHAT'S COMING TO  
YOU, BELLOUNDS! WE'LL BRING  
A JUG AND A PACK O' CARDS  
ALONG, TOO!





AFTER THREE DAYS...

WILS, THERE'S A RIDER  
COMING--- LOOKS LIKE ONE  
OF BILL BELLOUNDS'  
COWBOYS'

WHAT WOULD  
HE WANT  
HERE?

OLD BILL WOULD  
LIKE YOU TO COME  
DOWN TO THE HOUSE  
RIGHT NOW, WILS---  
I RECKON IT'S  
IMPORTANT!

TELL HIM  
I'LL START IN  
A FEW MIN-  
UTES, LEM!



DO YOU THINK THIS IS  
SOMETHING TO DO WITH--  
WITH COLLIE, BENT?

WE'LL KNOW  
WHEN WE GET  
THERE, WILS!

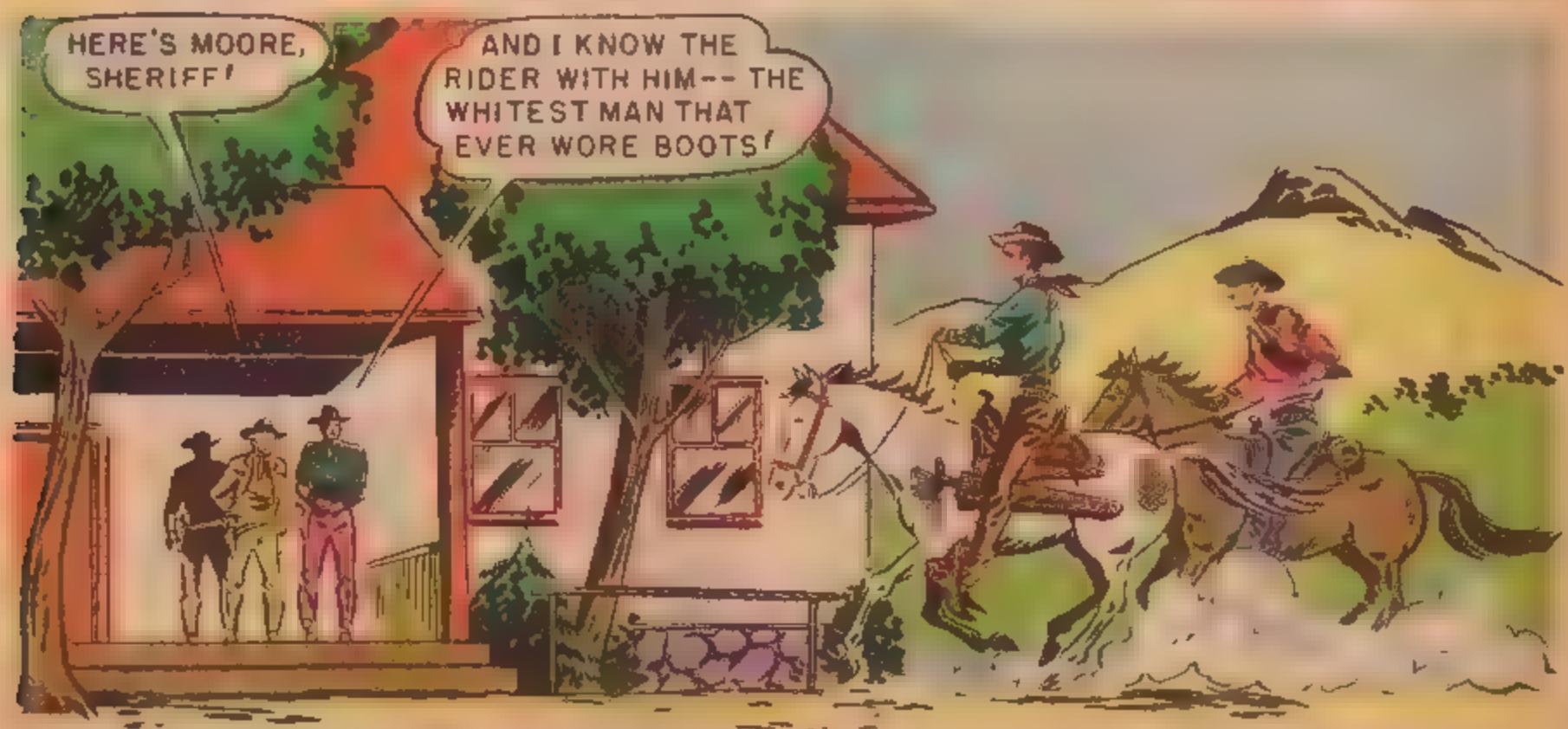
WHATEVER HAPPENS  
FROM NOW ON, SON,  
DON'T LOSE YOUR  
HEAD--- AND IF YOU  
FIND YOURSELF IN  
A TIGHT SPOT, LET  
ME HANDLE THINGS!

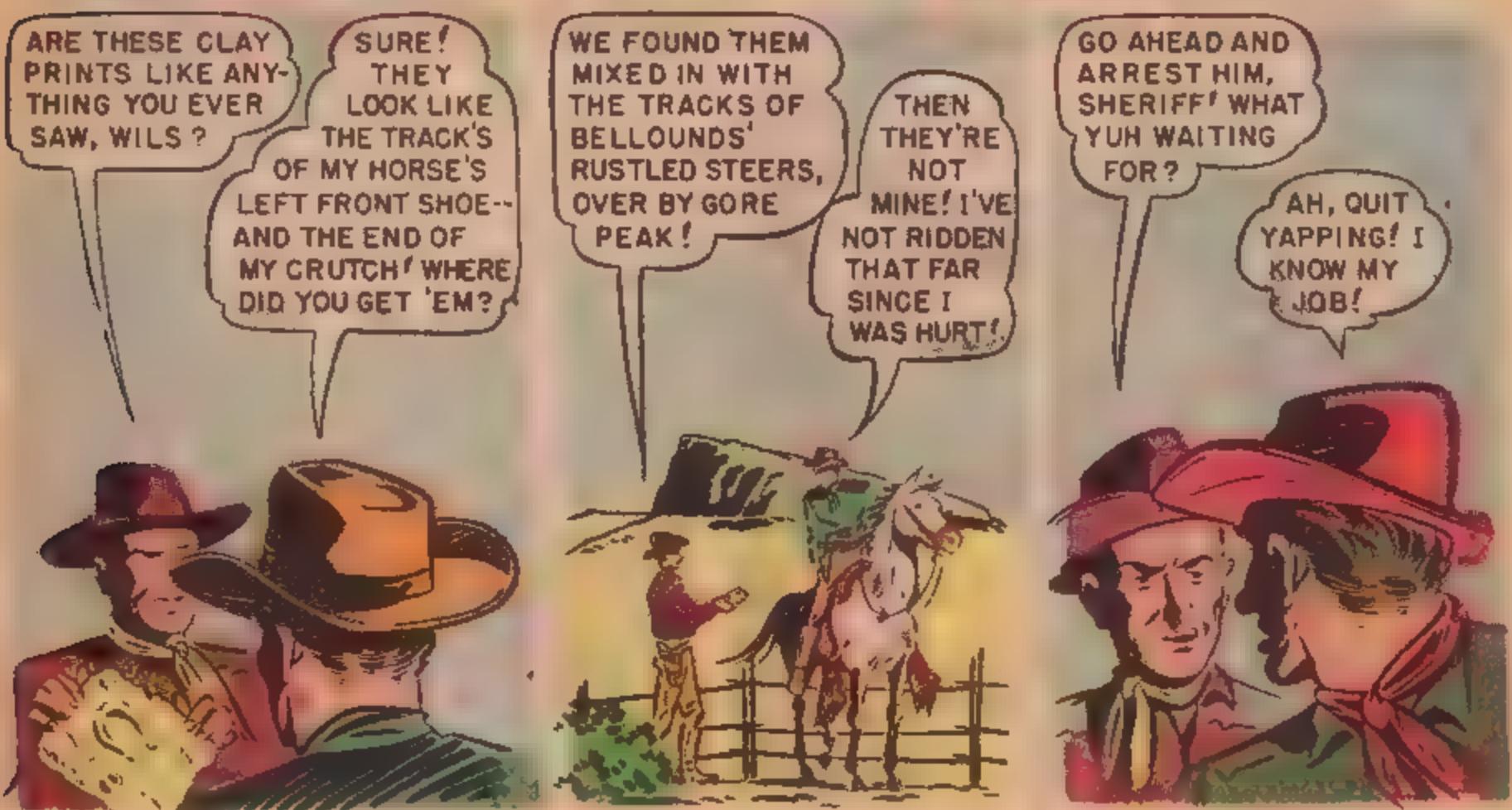
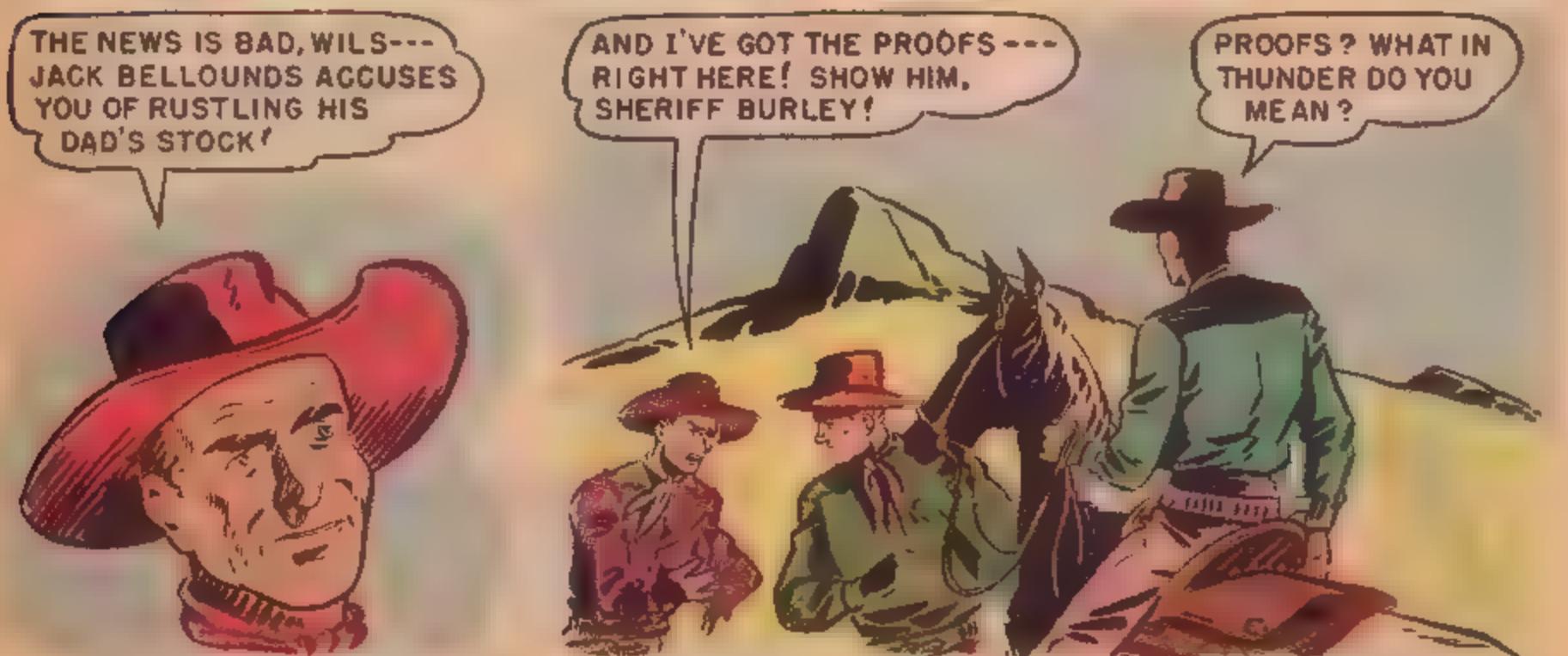
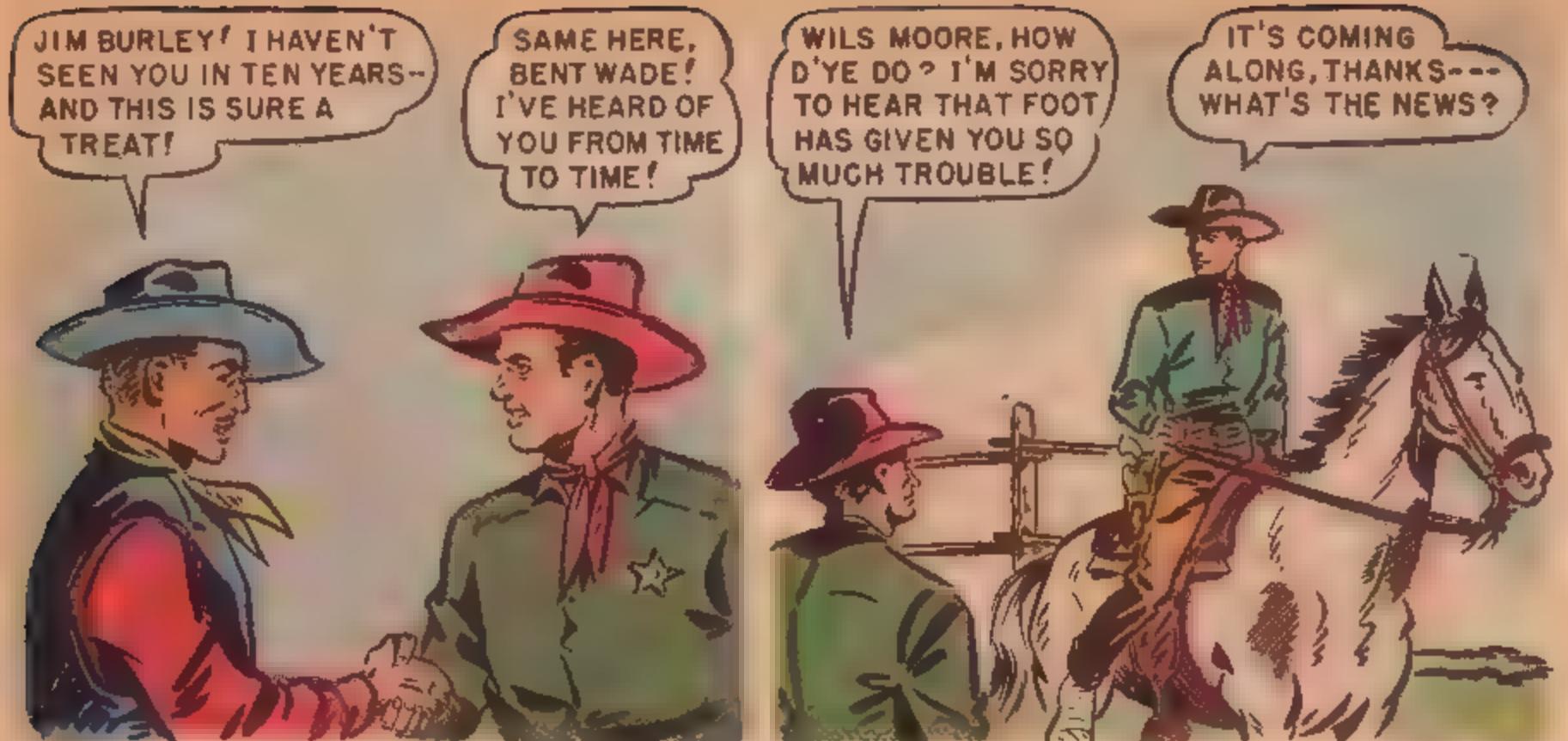
ALL RIGHT!  
I DON'T KNOW  
WHY, BUT I  
TRUST YOU  
MORE THAN  
ANY OTHER  
MAN, BENT!



HERE'S MOORE,  
SHERIFF!

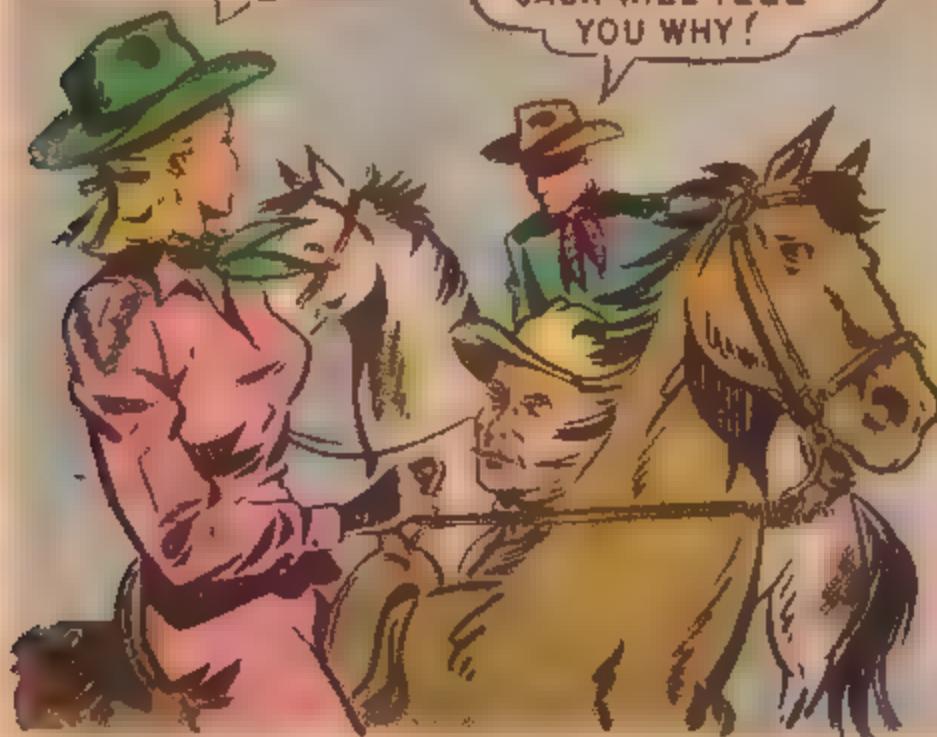
AND I KNOW THE  
RIDER WITH HIM-- THE  
WHITEST MAN THAT  
EVER WORE BOOTS!





DAD! WILS! WHAT'S GOING ON?

RECKON I'M UNDER ARREST, COLLIE-- JACK WILL TELL YOU WHY!



--- FOR STEALING DAD'S CATTLE ! YOUR BOY FRIEND IS GOING TO JAIL !

THAT IS RIDICULOUS! IT'S JUST NOT SO!

I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, MISS COLLIE!



YOU CAN'T ARREST WILS MOORE, SHERIFF! IT'S ALL NONSENSE!

I'VE GOT TO, CHILD! BUT THE TRIAL WON'T BE TILL NEXT MONTH-- AND THERE'S NO JAIL THIS SIDE OF DENVER, SO ...



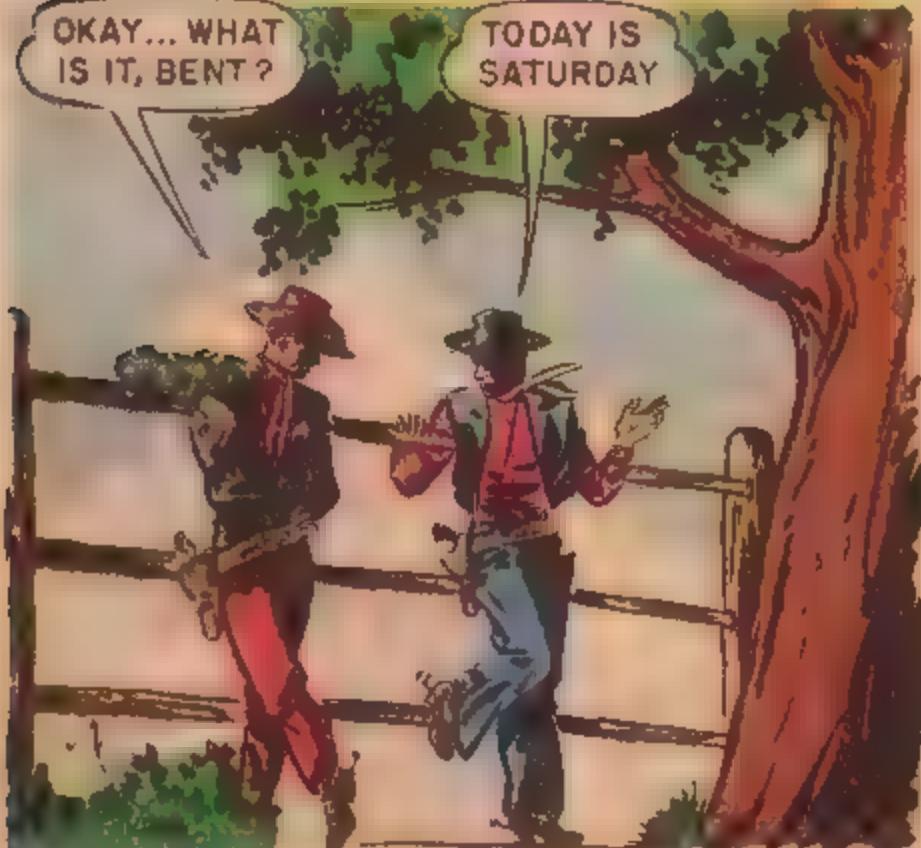
... IF IT'S ALL RIGHT WITH YOU, WADE, I'LL MAKE YOU ANSWERABLE FOR MOORE'S APPEARANCE IN KREMMLING WHEN I WANT HIM !

FINE! I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT, JIM-- AND I'D LIKE A WORD WITH YOU IN PRIVATE !



OKAY... WHAT IS IT, BENT?

TODAY IS SATURDAY

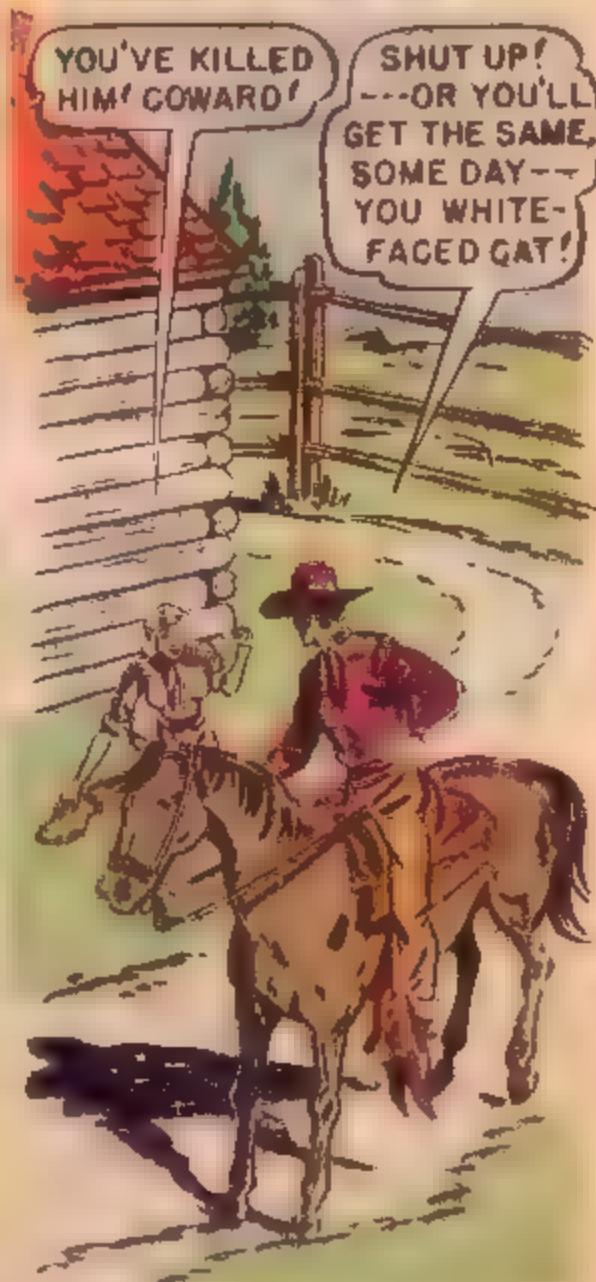
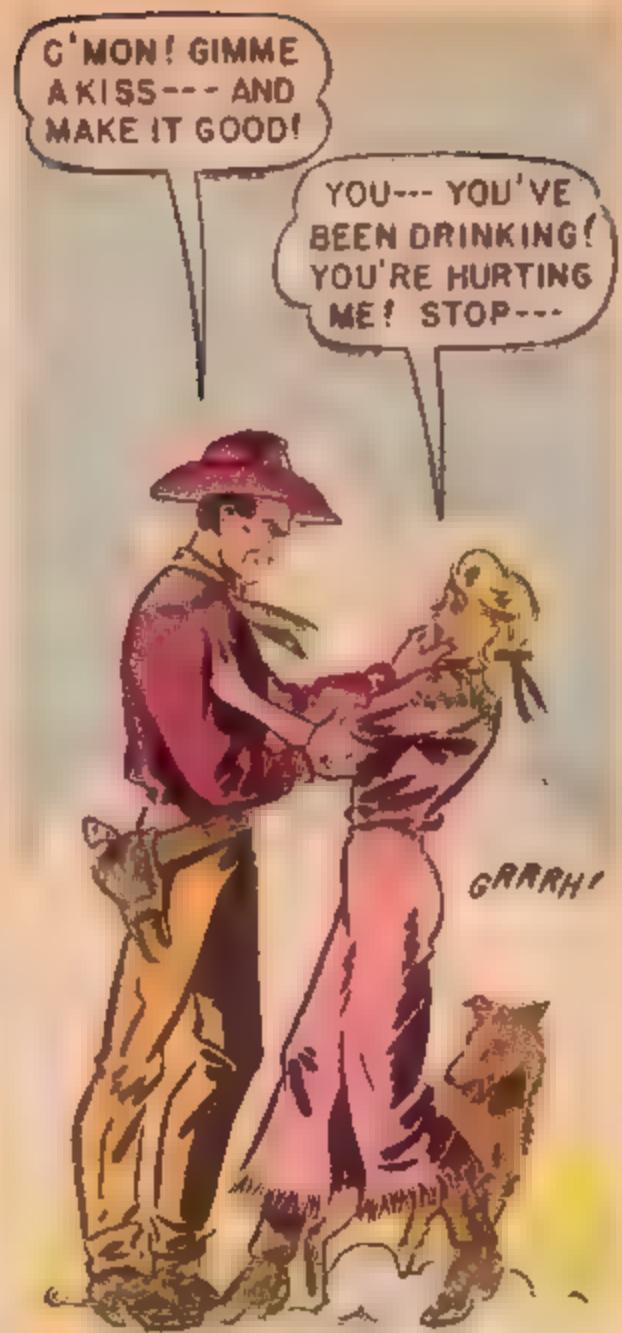


PROMISE ME YOU'LL BE AT THE OLD CABIN UNDER GORE PEAK, THIS NEXT WEDNESDAY, ONE HOUR PAST NOON . AND BRING A DEPUTY !

THE PLACE WHERE I FOUND THOSE TRACKS? THUNDER! I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR GAME IS--- BUT I'LL BE THERE, BENT!



ON WEDNESDAY, COLLIE'S DAY BEGINS AS USUAL...



I SAW WHAT HAPPENED,  
BUT I WAS TOO FAR OFF  
TO INTERFERE.  
COLLIE!

BENT! OH--- I'M  
JUST THANKFUL  
THAT JACK DIDN'T  
REALLY KILL FOX!



JUST KNOCKED THE  
WIND OUT OF HIM---  
COLLIE ---ARE YOU  
STILL INTENDING TO  
MARRY JACK BELLOUNDS ?

YES, BENT! I  
DESPISE HIM---  
AND I'M AFRAID  
HE'LL NEVER  
CHANGE--- BUT  
I'VE GIVEN DAD MY  
WORD THAT I'D  
DO IT !



THAT'S THAT, THEN---  
BUT YOU HAVEN'T DONE IT  
YET--- SO HOW ABOUT  
RIDING OVER TO WILS'  
WITH ME, BEFORE DINNER?  
IT'LL GET YOUR MIND  
OFF--- THIS !

ALL RIGHT,  
BENT--- I WILL!  
AND I'LL TAKE  
FOX WITH US !



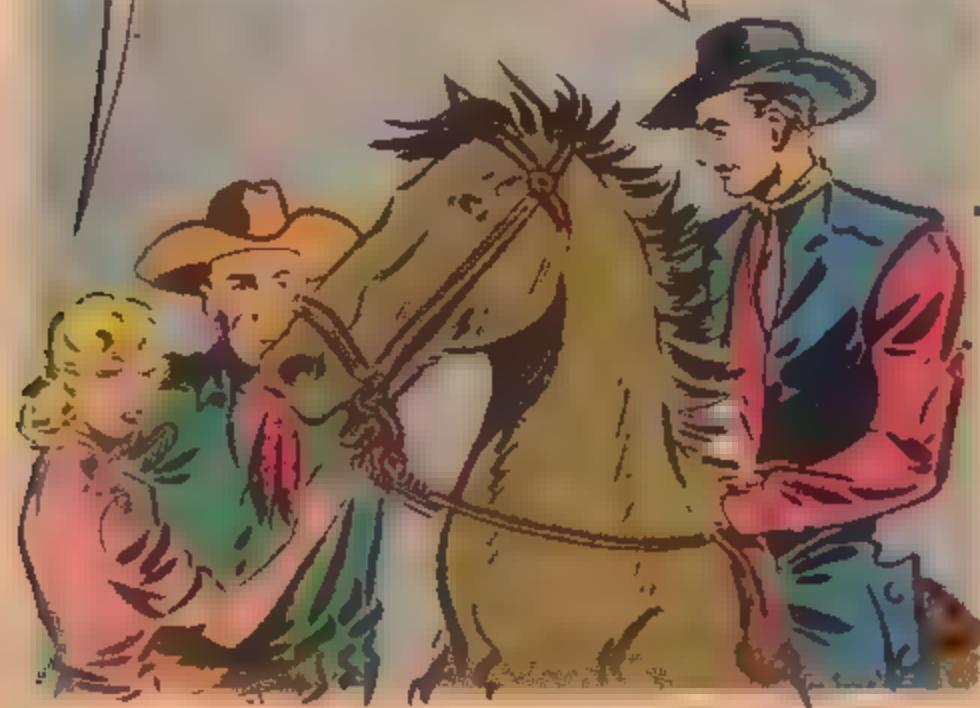
SEE HERE WHAT  
I BROUGHT YOU, WILS'

COLLIE!  
THIS IS A ---  
A FINE  
SURPRISE!



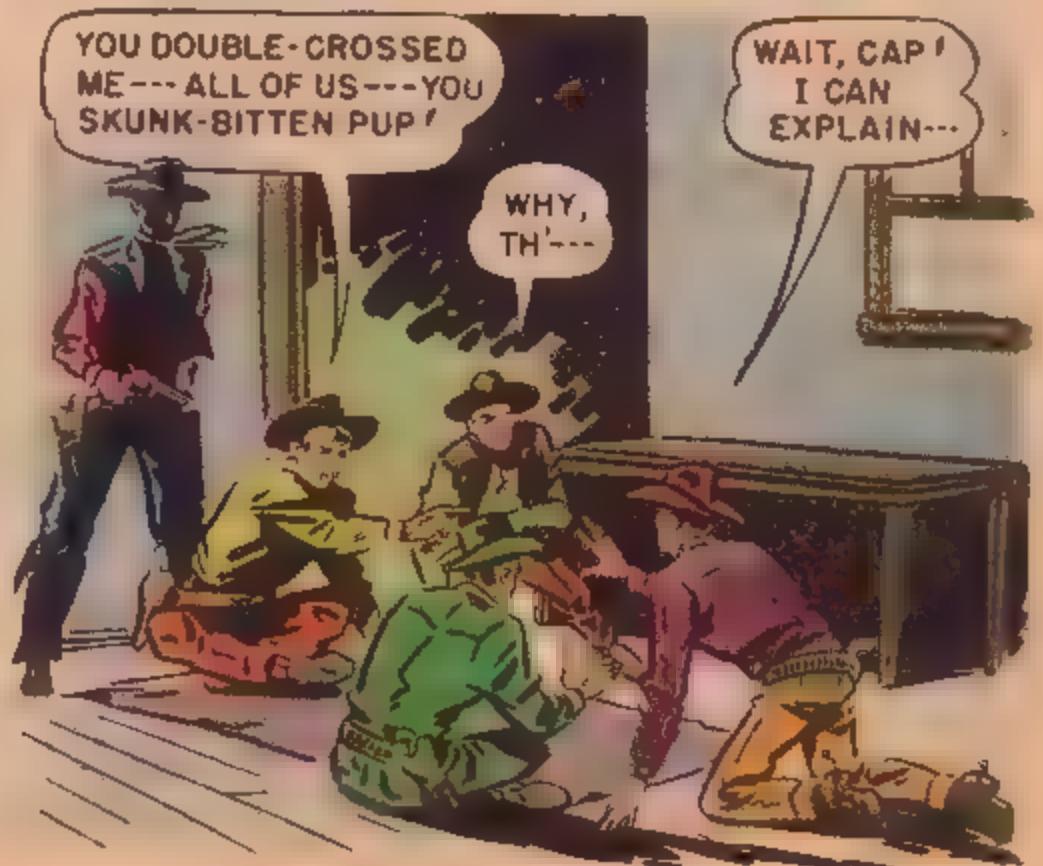
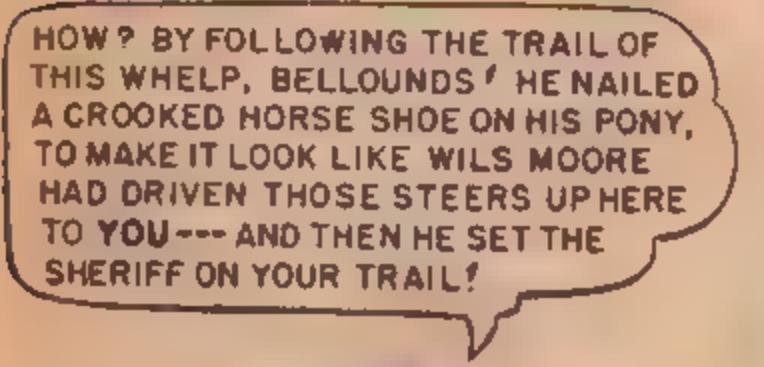
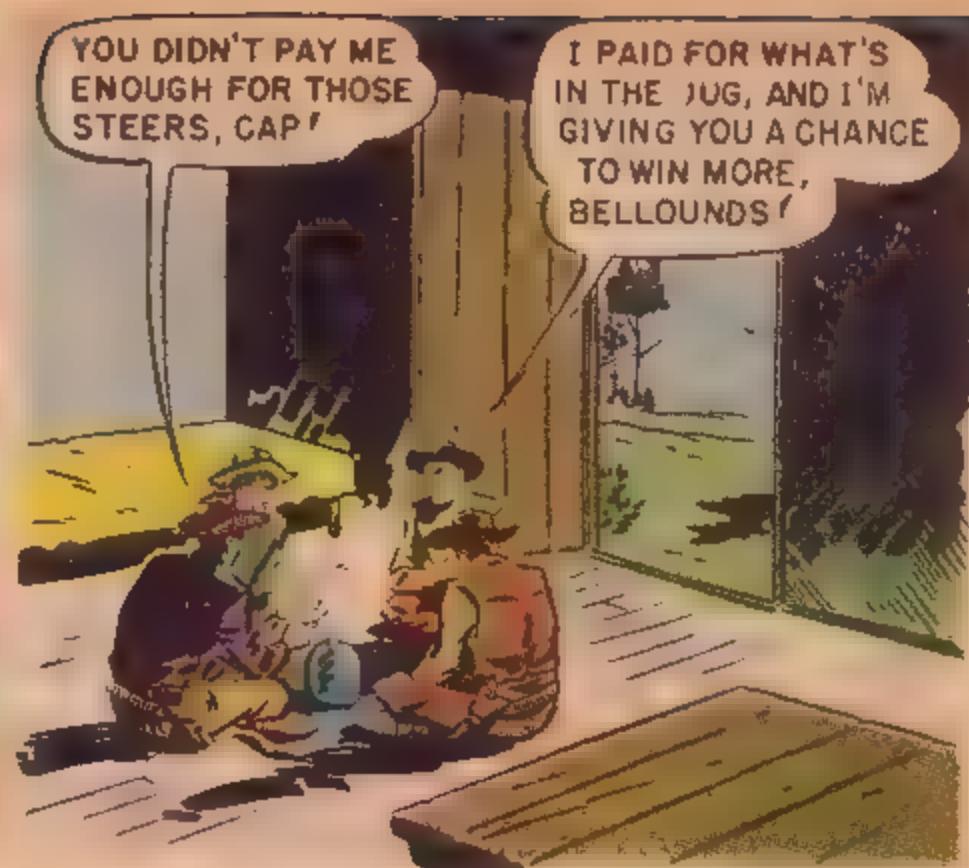
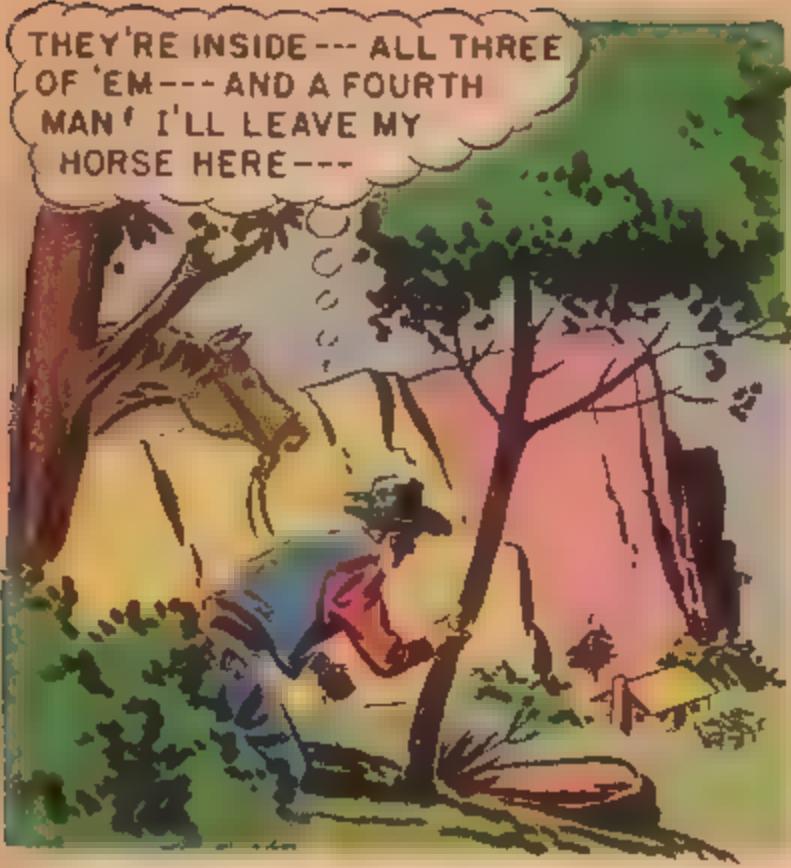
BENT! WHERE ARE  
YOU GOING ?

LITTLE JOB I'VE GOT TO  
FINISH --- IT SHOULDN'T  
TAKE LONG !



IT SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG -- BUT  
IF CAP FOLSOM IS TOO QUICK ON  
THE DRAW, IT MIGHT TAKE THE  
REST OF MY LIFE !

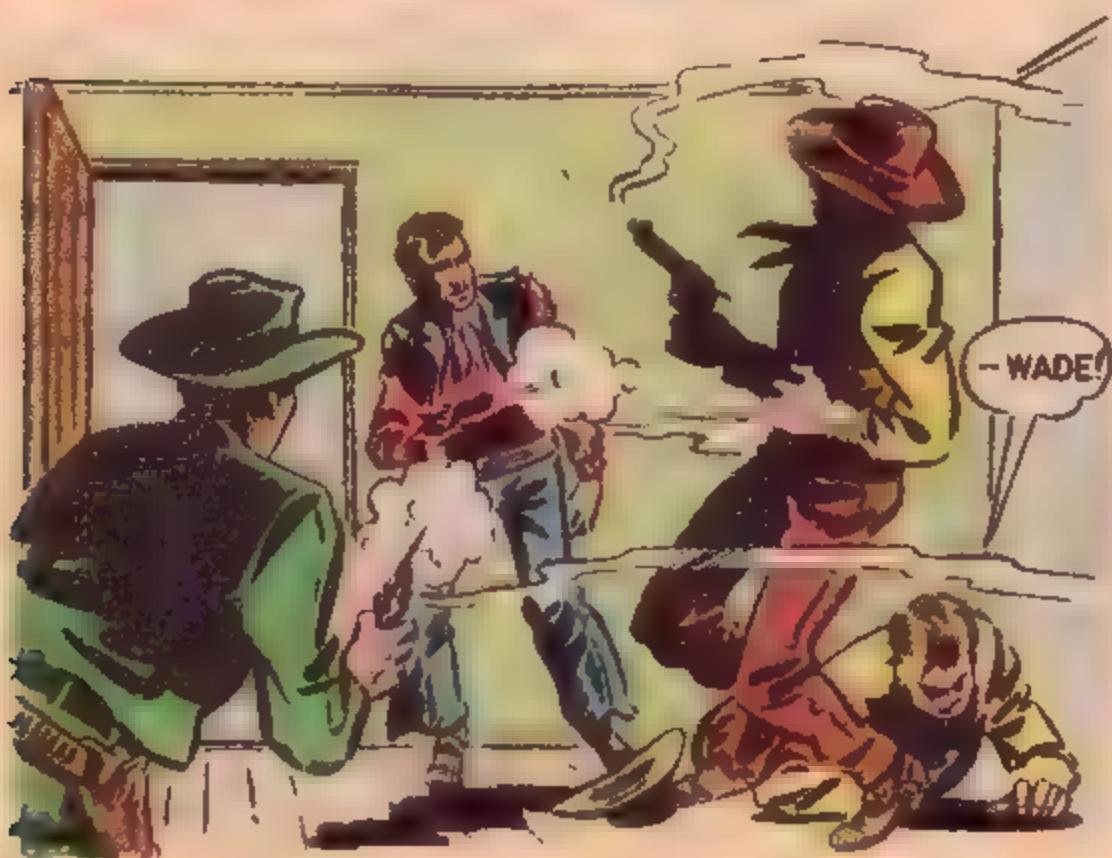
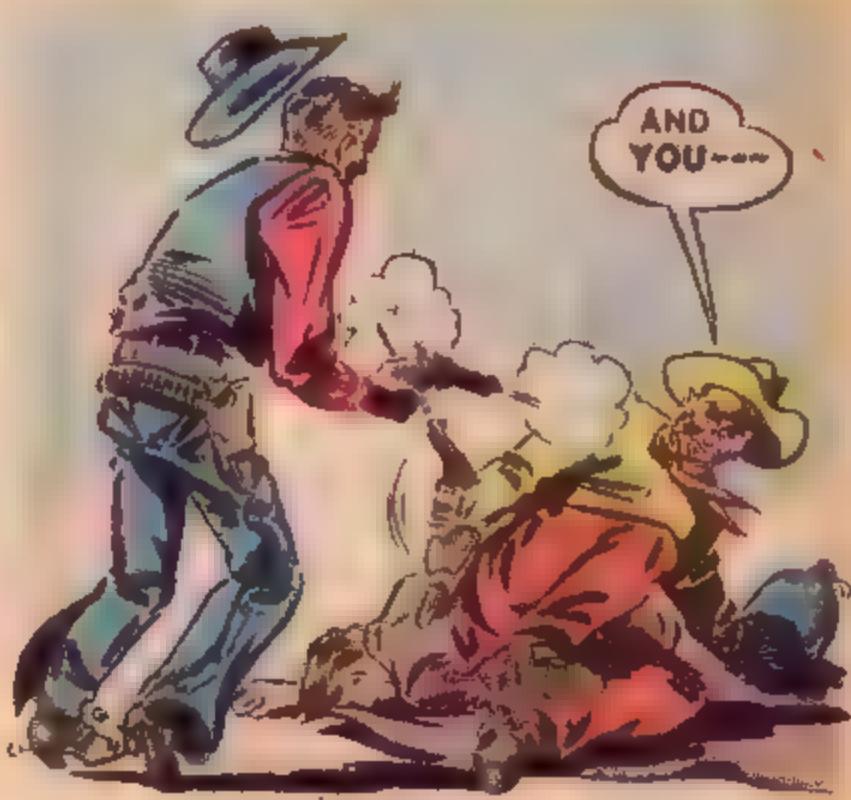
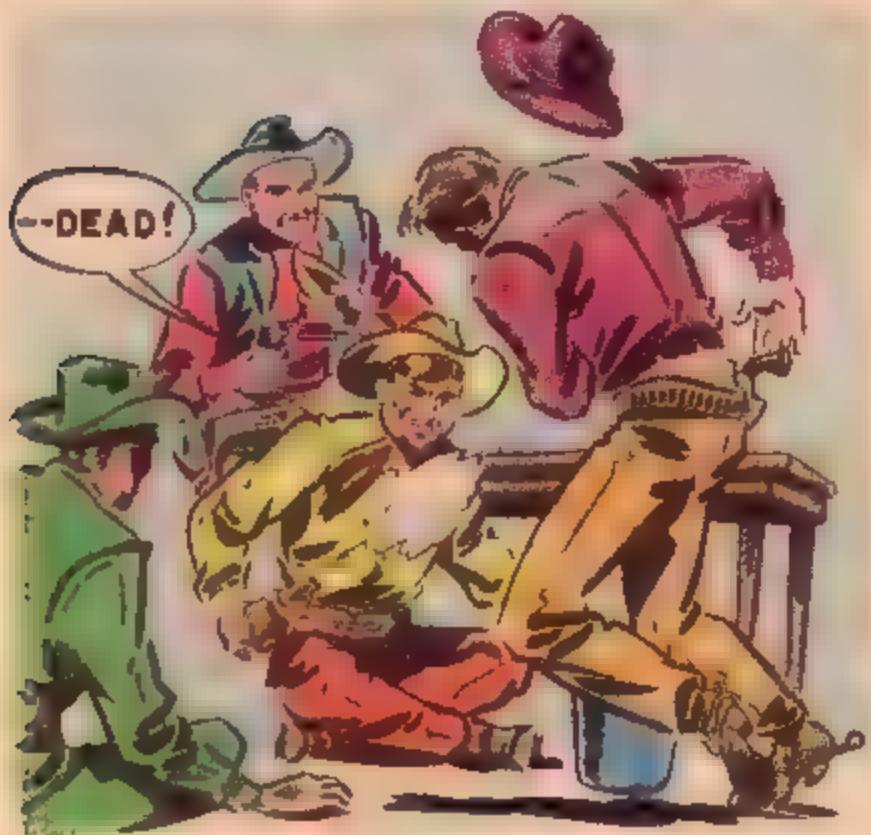


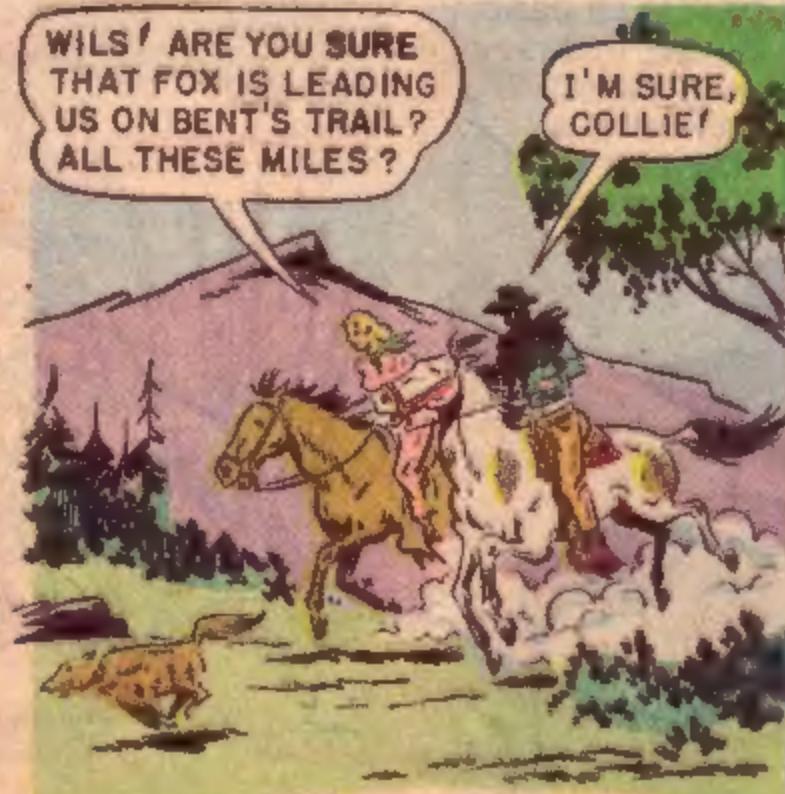
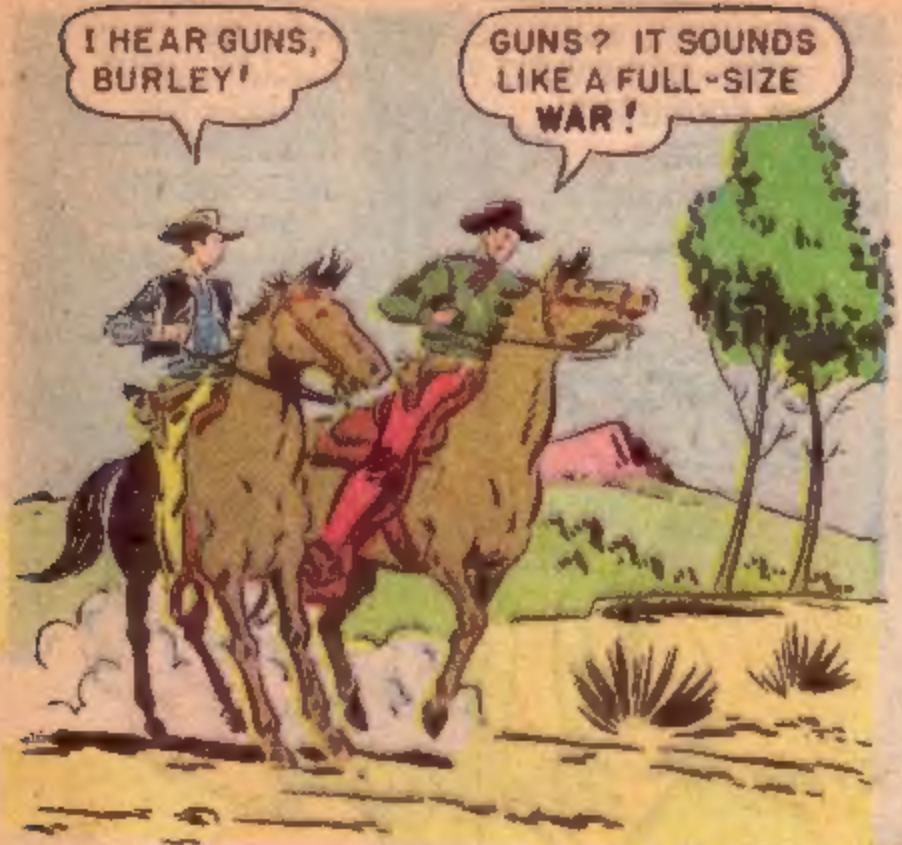


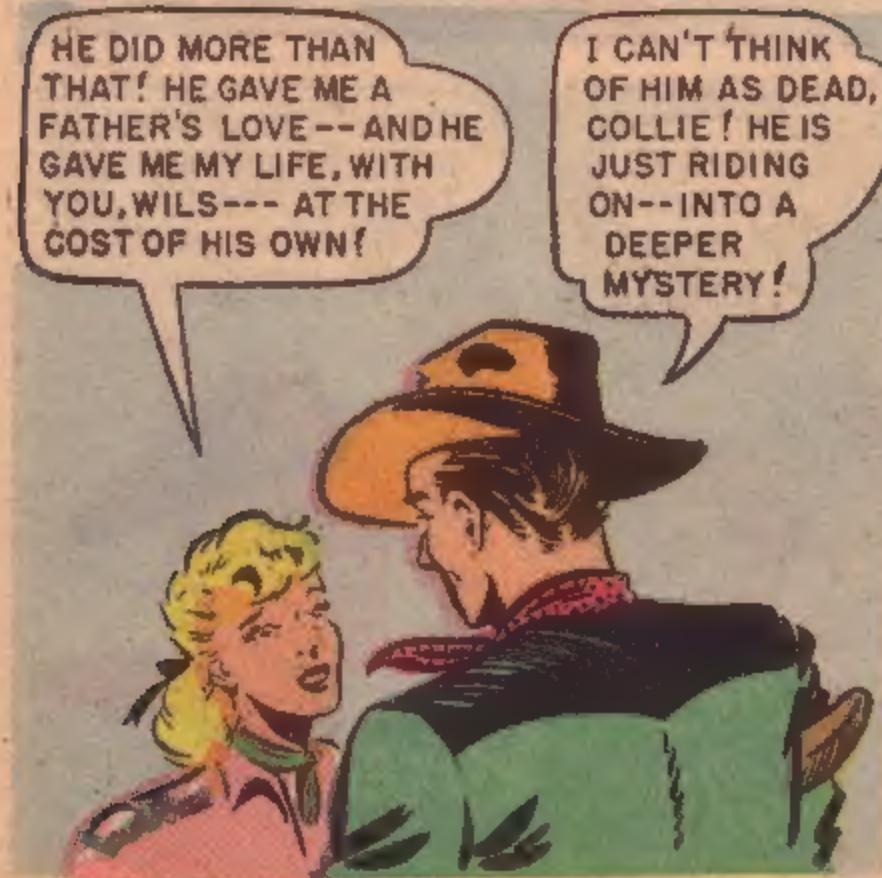
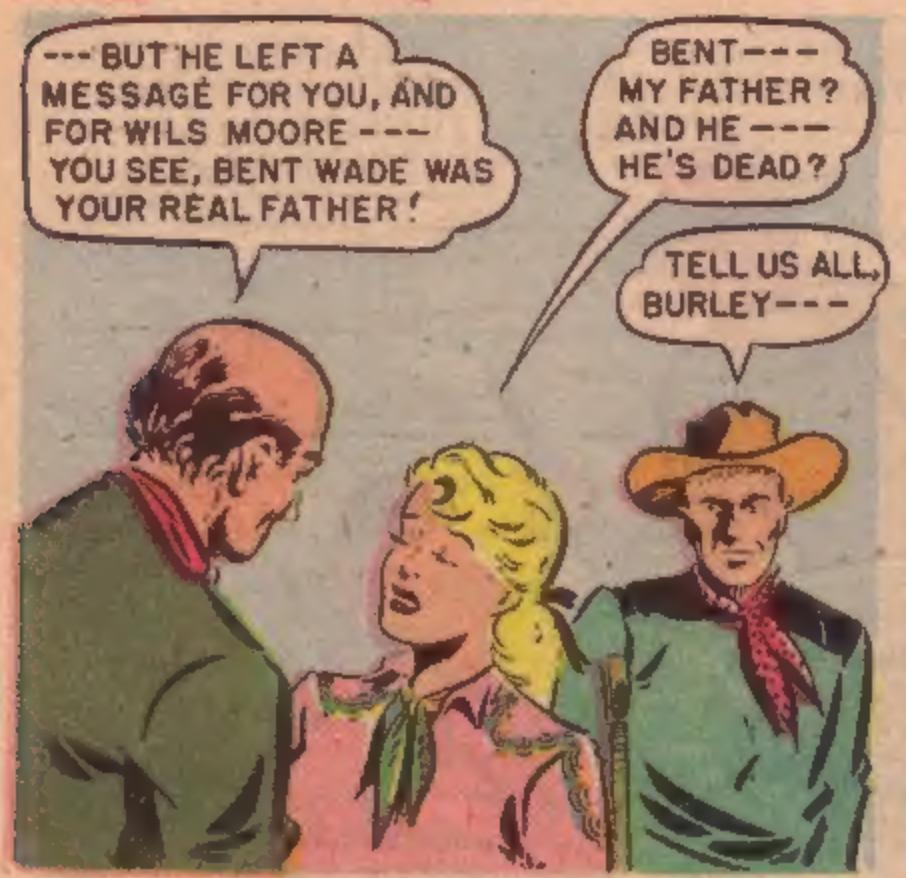
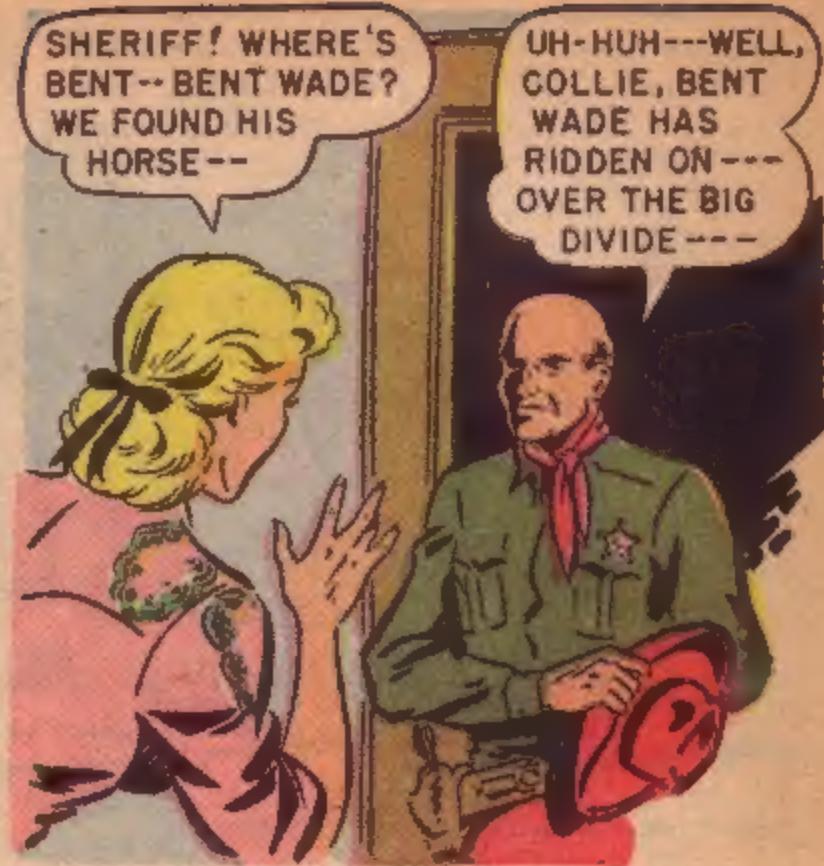
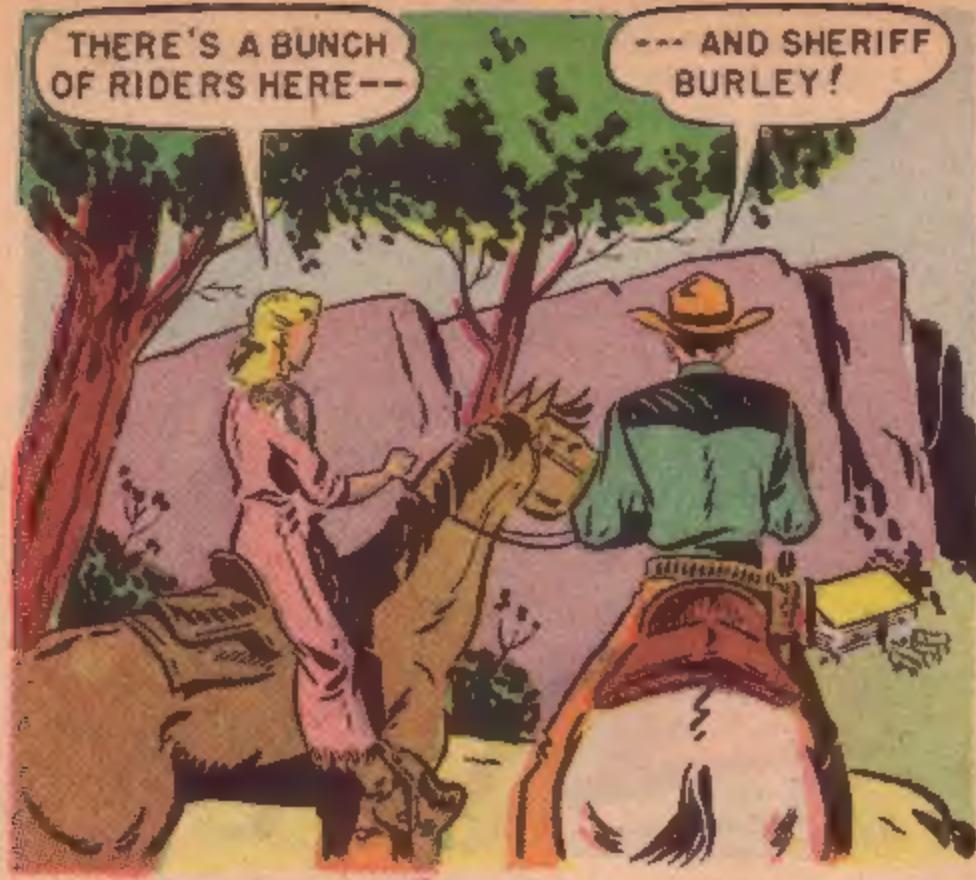
CAREFUL, CAP! I DON'T AIM TO KILL YOU UNLESS YOU MAKE ME! SHERIFF BURLEY'S DUE HERE ANY MINUTE ... HE'LL TAKE YOU IN---

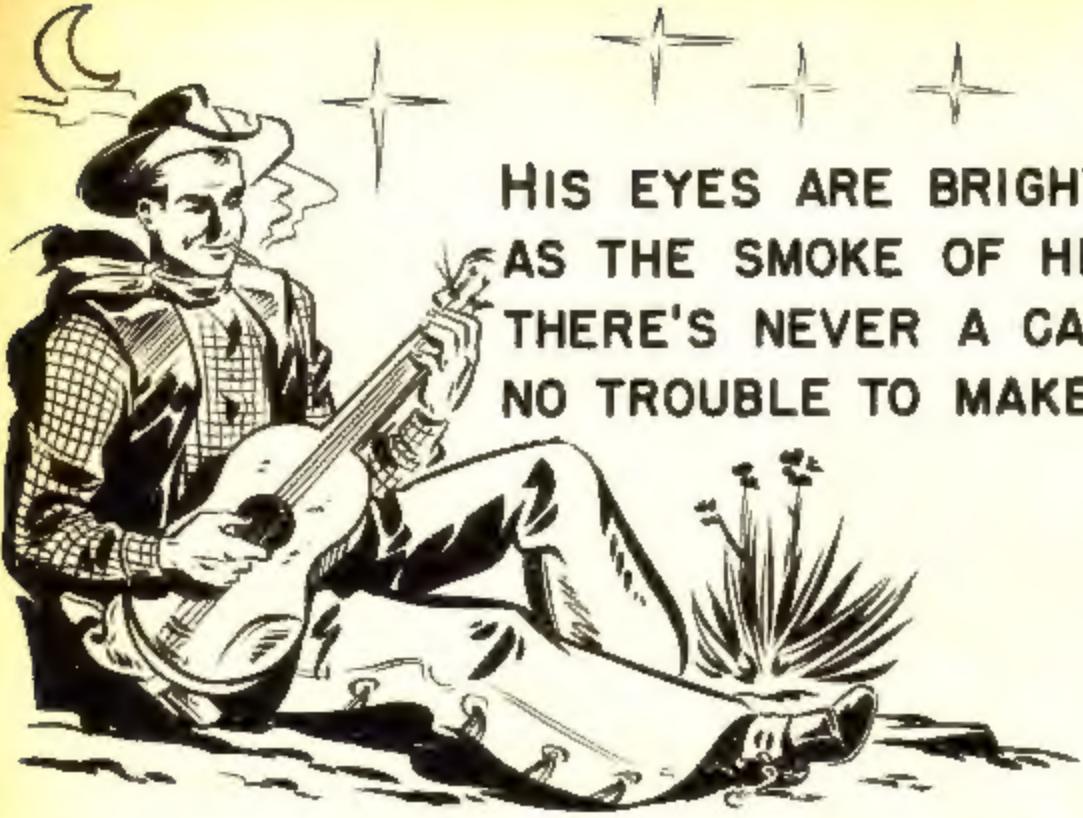
FOR TWENTY YEARS IN PRISON? I DON'T WANT IT, WADE!

RIGHT NOW THERE'S JUST ONE THING I WANT --- AND THAT'S TO SEE THAT LYING, DOUBLE-CROSSING COYOTE PUP---





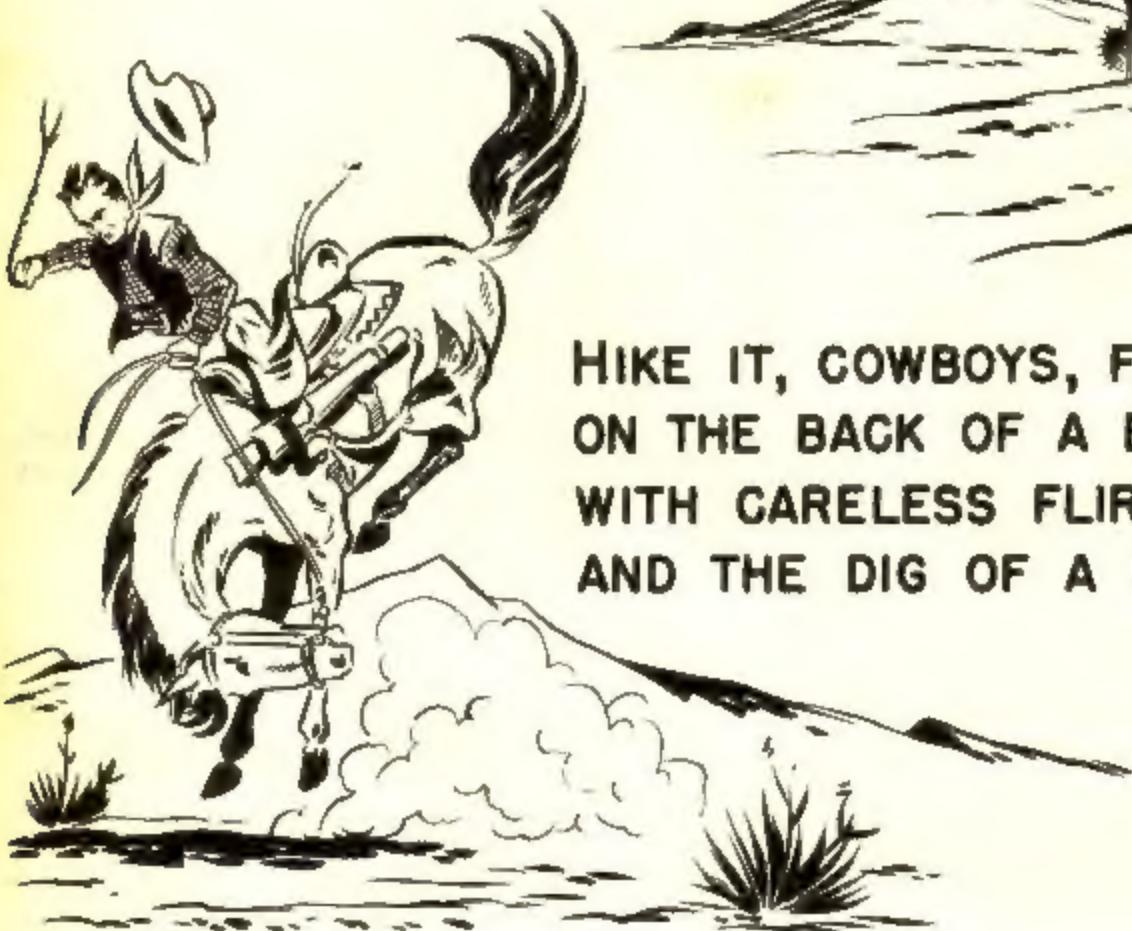




HIS EYES ARE BRIGHT AND HIS HEART IS LIGHT  
AS THE SMOKE OF HIS CIGARETTE;  
THERE'S NEVER A CARE FOR HIS SOUL TO BEAR,  
NO TROUBLE TO MAKE HIM FRET.



THE RAPID BEAT OF HIS BRONCO'S FEET  
ON THE SOD AS HE SPEEDS ALONG  
KEEPST LIVING TIME TO THE RINGING RHYME  
OF HIS ROLICKING COWBOY SONG.



HIKE IT, COWBOYS, FOR THE RANGE AWAY  
ON THE BACK OF A BRONC OF STEEL,  
WITH CARELESS FLIRT OF THE RAWHIDE QUIRT  
AND THE DIG OF A ROWELED HEEL.



THE WINDS MAY HOWL AND THE THUNDER GROWL,  
OR THE BREEZES LOWLY MOAN;  
A COWBOY'S LIFE IS A ROYAL LIFE,  
HIS SADDLE HIS KINGLY THRONE.



Where the Pecos River winds and turns in its journey to the sea,  
From its white walls of sand and rock striving ever to be free,  
Near the highest railroad bridge that all these modern times have  
seen,

Dwells fair young Patty Morehead, the Pecos River queen.  
She is known by every cowboy on the Pecos River wide;  
They know full well that she can shoot, that she can rope and ride.  
She goes out to every roundup, every cow work without fail,  
Looking out for her cattle, branded "walking hog on rail."  
She made her start with cattle, yes, made it with a rope;  
Can tie down every maverick before it can strike a lope.  
She can rope and tie and brand it as quick as any man;  
She's voted by all cowboys an A-1 top cowhand.  
Across the Comstock railroad bridge, the highest in the West,  
Patty rode her horse one day, a lover's heart to test;  
For he told her he would gladly risk all dangers for her sake—  
But the puncher wouldn't follow, so she's still without a mate.